

JUNE 19, 2006

# The American Conservative

## Where Have All the Intellectuals Gone?



**NSA Reaches Out & Taps Someone**  
**End of Republican Ascendancy?**  
**Why Bush Wants Amnesty**

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## DON'T KNOW MUCH BIOLOGY

Peter Wood's interesting article on The King's College's effort to educate evangelical students for leadership roles in American institutions ("The Old College Try," May 8) prompted me to review the course offerings at the college. I wish Mr. Wood had informed readers that the future leaders will have had no exposure to science. There are no courses in geology, cosmology, physics, biology, chemistry, or other scientific disciplines.

The prospect of leaders lacking a liberal education is merely frightening, but students who are not told the astonishing fact that the Pax 6 gene of a fruit fly, when transplanted into a mouse embryo, will issue instructions to produce a mouse eye, will have been abused by their mentors. How sad.

L.L. WADE, Professor Emeritus  
University of California, Davis  
*via e-mail*

### Peter Wood replies:

Professor Wade is correct that the curriculum of The King's College as it stands right now has no science. That's for two reasons. First, teaching science well requires a very sizable investment in laboratories, equipment, and qualified faculty members. As a start-up college, we had to pick our shots. Our goal was to be excellent in a few things. Second, we chose a politics, philosophy, and economics core curriculum because we think these are the areas that are least well served in American higher education. The student who wishes to study one of the sciences has many good choices. Science education is what American colleges and universities by and large do best, partly because it is the curriculum least compromised by faddish ideologies.

## EVERYDAY LOW BLOWS

In her review of *The Wal-Mart Effect* ("The High Cost of Low Prices," May 22) Marian Kester Coombs shares an opinion with David Ricardo and Karl Marx—

that the primary value of a product is in the labor used to make it. This is pure crap, and you should be ashamed to be publishing such drivel. Her entire piece was an affront to any sensible person. Let this New-Age, pyramid-power, crystal-worshipping tedium find voice in other magazines. Yours is far too good for it.

PAUL RAKO  
*via e-mail*

### Marian Coombs replies:

Mr. Rako's *ad feminam* attack fails to smart. "Pure crap" plus "ashamed" plus "drivel" plus "affront" plus "crystal-worshipping tedium" equal precisely nothing. If he had a position superior to the theory that creative human labor is the origin of surplus value, he would have argued it.

## LETTER OF RESIGNATION

I cast my first vote in 1992 for George Bush, then continued to vote a Republican ticket for Bob Dole and George W. Bush (twice). But I have had a political epiphany and have decided that voting Republican doesn't necessarily mean voting for a conservative party.

This "debate" on immigration has shown me who wields power in the GOP: Big Business. My mistaken idea that social conservatives like myself and Big Business could coexist in a political party now seems tragically laughable. I guess I can only blame myself for being fooled through four straight presidential elections.

The idea that we would legalize 11 million (and perhaps more) criminals as a reward for breaking the laws of the United States is sickening. The Left sees these illegals as a bumper crop of resentful minorities to inculcate with the entitlement mentality, and the political Right sees this mass of under-educated foreign-language speakers as an unending source of cheap labor.

Who wants to see this country preserved in its present state, that is, Eng-

lish-speaking with at least some residual respect for our Constitution? 60 million Third World voters can't be wrong after all, and the spectacle of the "right-wing" party falling over itself to find entitlements for these new "Americans" will be the disgusting spectacle I'll witness for the next 30 years.

I now realize that conservatives have no home in the GOP and will act accordingly. I will not be scared into voting for the GOP because of my hatred of abortion. I will gladly just not vote, as the only thing more repulsive than voting for the economic elites of the GOP is voting for the social and intellectual elites of the Democratic Party.

MATTHEW P. CHURCHILL  
*Cary, N.C.*

## TRENDY TYRANNY

Peter Hitchens's piece ("Big Brother Watches Britain," May 8) was a wonderful portal into the debate about what really is the most credible threat to Western liberty.

That threat is likely not to be an external hobgoblin. Islamofascism, nasty as it is, has a next-to-nothing chance of being able to seduce enough people to take over the kingdom. And all the caricature villains of our intellectual landscape such as Hitler or Stalin have no lasting appeal to either the budding tyrants or totalitarian groupies of today. They're so 20th century, darling! If tyranny ever rises in the modern West, it will be crafted from the freshest fears and hottest trends of the age. What is chic and sufficiently warped out of shape is most likely to enslave.

J. WROBLEWSKI  
*Canada*

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[DIPLOMACY]

## WE ONLY READ BLACKMAIL

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's 18-page letter to President Bush recalls Nikita Khrushchev and John F. Kennedy's pen-pal negotiation at the height of the Cuban missile crisis—except that this White House lacks JFK's diplomatic dexterity. Sensing an opening in the Russian leader's note, Kennedy wisely averted war. But disregarding an even wider berth, the Bush administration dismisses Ahmadinejad's overture—the first direct approach by an Iranian leader to an American president in a quarter-century—as so much kookery and continues its march toward another Mideast confrontation.

If the next week's news was any indication, Ahmadinejad should try another tack to get President Bush's attention. The *New York Times* reported that administration advisers "recommended a broad new approach to dealing with North Korea that would include beginning negotiations on a peace treaty..." These gentle gestures toward a charter member of the Axis of Evil seem out of character for the Bushies. In evaluating candidates for liberation, brutal North Korea, starving its citizens to fund its fortification, seems an obvious choice for regime change. But unlike Iran, North Korea has the bomb. So we'll talk.

Within weeks of labeling the USSR an evil empire, Reagan opened negotiations with Brezhnev. Bush, likewise, could maintain his axis designation and engage an Iranian leader clearly desperate for dialogue. Instead, he baits him toward proliferation, signaling that the surest way to be taken seriously is to do the very thing we have sworn not to tolerate.

[LIBERTY]

## 1-800-THOUGHT CRIME

Watch what you say next time you visit Boulder, Colorado. An insensitive joke or misheard use of the word "niggardly"



might get you reported to the city's new "hate hotline." The Boulder City Council has not actually criminalized any speech—yet. But they have allocated \$16,000 for a new phone bank citizens can call to drop a dime on any un-PC utterances overheard while eavesdropping.

Where's the ACLU? They're on the case—though early statements from the group gave the impression it was only informers' anonymity they cared to protect. "[I]t's potentially chilling if people think they are providing this information in confidence and then that information were provided to the government or the government sought access to it," Judd Golden, chairman of the Boulder ACLU, told the *Denver Post*. The Boulder ACLU has since come out against the hotline—but only after the story attracted national attention.

[IMMIGRATION]

## OUR FRENCH FUTURE

We need no crystal ball to discern the future impact of Bush's guest-worker program. A ticket to France will do.

The rioters who tore through its streets last fall were the offspring of North Africans imported to do the sort of dirty jobs Bush is now auctioning to Mexico's low bidders. Their rage, if not excusable, is understandable: they have no home to return to and little hope of escaping underclass status.

Five million Muslims now live in France, stacked into urban ghettos. "A kind of anti-society has grown up in them—a population that derives the meaning of its life from the hatred it bears for the other, 'official,' society in France," Theodore Dalrymple wrote in *City Journal*.

Awakened to the consequences of this hostility, French voters now list immigration as their top concern. Interior Minister Nicholas Sarkozy, who plans to seek the presidency, has answered with legislation that would prioritize skilled immigration, restrict family unification, and end the right of illegal immigrants to receive resident status after living in France for 10 years. It passed the National Assembly by a 367-164 vote and is headed to the Senate. "We no longer want immigration that is inflicted," Sarkozy said. "We want selected immigration. The system of integration the French way no longer works."

Much as they may be loath to take French lessons, Americans lulled by President Bush's pretty words would do well to take note: we have seen the future, and it smells of burning cars.

[CULTURE]

## ENGLISH AS RACISM

*Hablas inglés?* If so, you could be a racist, at least according to the Seattle Pubic School system. Seattle's educrats have discovered no fewer than five dis-

tinct species of racism, including “cultural racism,” defined as “Those aspects of society that overtly and covertly attribute value and normality to white people and Whiteness,” such as “having a future time orientation” and “emphasizing individualism as opposed to a more collective ideology”—and “defining one form of English as standard.” Correct English, exercise of forethought, and individual initiative—forms of racism all—evidently are not taught in Seattle’s public schools.

Then again, maybe nobody pays heed to such multicultural ukases—nobody except Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid, that is. “I think this amendment is racist,” Reid announced before the Senate approved a measure to make English the official language of government. But Reid and the children of the Northeast can rest easy: non-racist Attorney General Alberto Gonzales has said that by his reading “these amendments would not have an effect on any existing rights currently provided under federal law.” Perhaps he went to grade school in Seattle.

#### [POLITICS]

### HUNTING RINOS

“Republicans have controlled the Legislature here since 1995, but the size, the scope, and even the ineffectiveness of our government has continued to grow.” Although this sounds just like GOP-run Washington, these words were actually spoken by an upstart conservative primary challenger in Pennsylvania who was disgusted by his party’s profligacy and successfully ran on a platform of “making Republicans Republican again.”

Mike Folmer, a politically inexperienced tire salesman, soundly defeated the state’s senate majority leader despite being outspent 20-to-1. Folmer wasn’t alone. Insurgent conservatives upset the senate president pro tempore and sent

nearly a dozen other big-spending Republicans packing. The GOP legislature regularly increased spending beyond the levels requested by Pennsylvania’s Democratic governor and finally pushed its luck too far by approving pay raises of up to 54 percent for all three branches of government. Republican activists fretted that if this had been the general election rather than the primary, these disenchanted conservative voters might just have stayed home.

There is a lesson for conservatives tired of being taken for granted by the GOP. Power doesn’t come from proping up big-government incumbents—it comes from throwing them out.

#### [BUDGET]

### ALL THREAT, NO VETO

Are you of the impression that the federal budget is careening out of control and President Bush’s failure to veto a single appropriations bill is one of the causes? Let The Architect put your mind at ease. Speaking at the American Enterprise Institute, Karl Rove claimed that the president enforced fiscal discipline by simply threatening to veto legislation.

“The administration issued 39 veto threats on six major spending bills,” Rove argued. “And Congress responded to those veto threats by restraining spending to the levels proposed in the president’s budget ... the impact of the president’s veto messages have been an unreported achievement.”

Later, a reporter asked about the times Congress did not meet Bush’s spending targets but he signed the bill anyway, specifically bringing up last year’s pork-filled transportation package. Rove replied, “Now, you brought up one example ... You can’t find any other bill where they’ve breached his target.” Judging from the red ink pouring from Capitol Hill, either the Bush adviser’s memory failed him a second time or those spending targets are still too high. ■

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# Is the GOP Ascendancy Over?

In America, parties enter periods of hegemony when they are seen as having resolved the crisis of the age.

Lincoln, the first Republican president, reunited in blood a Union that had sundered over his election and a Southern rebellion against the ascendancy of an industrializing North.

With the crushing of the Confederacy by the armies of Sherman and Grant, the assassination of Lincoln on Good Friday 1865, and the abolition of slavery, the Republican Party appeared to have solved the crisis of the age. The GOP owned the patriotism issue, “waving the bloody shirt,” and the morality issue, emancipation, and thus became America’s party.

From 1860 to 1932, the GOP gave America 13 presidents, three of whom were assassinated. Democrats gave us only two, Cleveland and Wilson, both of whom owed their election to divisions within the Republican Party.

By 1930, however, the nation was mired in the Depression. The architects were not Smoot and Hawley but, as Milton Friedman proved, the faceless men of the Federal Reserve. Easy money had overheated the economy and sent stock prices into the stratosphere. In 1929 came the Crash. Margin calls went out. Savings were withdrawn to meet them. Banks collapsed. With no deposit insurance, savings were wiped out and a third of our money supply vanished. The Fed failed to replenish it.

To the rescue in 1932 came “Dr. New Deal.” Though the great medicine man failed to heal the economy—unemployment was 17 percent in 1937—FDR was seen as a leader of energy and ideas doing his best to rescue a nation plunged into Depression by corporate greed. His act had about run its course

when war came, and though he ran in 1940, as Wilson had in 1916, on a pledge to keep us out of war, FDR steered us directly into the world storm. Then, like Lincoln, he died within days of victory as the United States emerged as liberator and savior of Western Europe and first power on earth.

The Democratic ascendancy from 1932 to 1968 gave us four Democratic presidents—FDR, Truman, Kennedy, and Johnson—while the GOP elected only the war hero Eisenhower. Democratic dominance of the Congress was even more pronounced. From 1930 to 1980, for a half century, Democrats held the Senate and House.

What destroyed the New Deal coalition was liberalism’s failure to cope with the crises of the 1960s: crime, Vietnam, and a moral and cultural revolution in which Democrats had a foot in both camps.

Nixon was the architect of Republican resurrection. After his 43 percent victory in 1968, comparable to Lincoln’s vote in 1860, he sheared off of the New Deal coalition, on the issues of patriotism and morality, 10 to 20 million northern ethnic Catholics and Southern Protestant conservatives whose families had voted Democratic for generations.

Though decried as a Southern Strategy, Nixon’s was a national strategy. In 1972, he swept 49 states and 60 percent of the nation, a feat duplicated by Ronald Reagan in 1984.

From 1968 to 1992, Republicans carried the White House in five of six national elections. By the midpoint and latter stages of this second Republican ascendancy, the party had achieved parity and was nearing hegemony at the

congressional level. All this is in peril today, as the Republican Party heads into a perfect storm in November that could sweep it away because it has failed not only to address the crisis of the age but to comprehend it.

What is that crisis? America is today a nation bankrupt in the sense that it cannot meet all the IOUs the party has handed out.

We have an empire we cannot afford. We are committed to fight wars on every continent, but we lack the soldiers to fight as Latin America, the Middle East, Russia, and China become anti-American.

We have Social Security and Medicare commitments to the baby boomers we cannot meet without a ruinous increase in taxes. We are running an unsustainable trade deficit of near \$800 billion, financed by borrowing from abroad that has begun to sink the dollar.

We have a shrinking industrial base and a growing dependence on China, Japan, and Asia for the necessities of our national life.

We have borders we cannot protect as the Third World mounts an invasion of America. And we have a ruling party that is dividing over these issues as the Democrats of 1968 divided over Vietnam, riots, and the cultural revolution—with this difference: America in ’68 had a Republican Party and conservative movement ready to rule. Few today have confidence in the party of Kennedy and Clinton, Kerry and Biden, Pelosi and Reid, Sharpton and Schumer.

In 1932, it took a Depression to bring to power new men and ideas. In 1968, it took a divisive war, urban riots, assassinations, and a cultural revolution to convince America to turn away from the party of their fathers. What is the calamity that is coming this time? ■

[small minds think alike]

# Where Have All the Intellectuals Gone?

To gain social acceptance, public thinkers needn't be profound, just reliably partisan.

By Chilton Williamson Jr.

BY NATURE, modern America is a commercial-ideological construct, paradox enough for a culture to bear. Yet America is a pragmatic-ideological society as well—an unfortunate combination that nonetheless is less paradoxical than it sounds when one considers that pragmatic ideologism, or ideological pragmatism, is simply an alternative description of that hopelessly commonplace attitude toward life and the world called Philistinism. If ever there was a Philistine nation in the history of the world, that nation is the United States since about 1865. Sinclair Lewis thought he was witnessing Philistinism *in excelsis* when he wrote his debunking novels in the 1920s, '30s, and '40s—and Lewis was a thoroughgoing and incorrigible Philistine himself! In fact, he hadn't seen anything yet. When it comes to Philistinism, the America of 2006 surpasses that of the Roaring Twenties as Paris Hilton tops Zelda Fitzgerald or *Carnival Conquest* the *R.M.S. Aquitania*.

As late as the 1920s, the U.S.—like the Western world as a whole—retained a cultural memory through which it continued to uphold (however shakily) standards pertaining to the Western artistic, intellectual, and religious traditions, a trained cultural conscience demanding adherence to those standards, and a kind of cultural etiquette reflecting that conscience (however grudgingly).

During the Twenties, when mass advertising, mass entertainment, mass communications, and mass politics had yet to reach their fullest development, full-blown self-promoting phonies were discoverable mainly among the political and business classes, with here and there a Picasso in the fine arts, a Samuel Beckett in literature, a Schönberg in music. In scholarship, serious plagiarism was rare and instances of egregious intellectual fraud, such as Prof. Michael Bellesiles's *Arming America: The Origins of a National Gun Culture* (published in 2000), virtually unheard of. Hemingway, though a poseur and often a liar, remained a conscientious, if uneven, artist until near the end of his life. Most artists of whatever sort held strong political opinions that they did not hesitate to indulge in their work, frequently to a fault. Yet there remained in those days a broad range of political and social opinion, too various for any single idea—or set of related ideas—either to gain exclusive control of the distribution of artistic rewards or ensure the delivery of inevitable punishments to its rivals and detractors.

The same held even in political commentary before the 1930s, when Franklin Roosevelt and his American Blackshirts succeeded in foisting their New Deal standard upon elite opinion, thereby seriously damaging some major journalistic careers, including those of

H.L. Mencken, John T. Flynn, and Garet Garrett. Even so, though the New Dealers could sideline these men, they never succeeded in silencing them, nor did the elite propaganda machine operating from Washington, D.C. and New York City ever fully succeed in discrediting dissent and supplanting it with the aggressive and vulgar uniformity of thought and expression that, developing from the 1960s, maintains a stranglehold on the Western mind today.

There never was a time in all of history when the reward for propagating one opinion was not greater than that bestowed for disseminating its opposite, when currying favor did not pay off better than ignoring or defying it, when catering to majority taste and sentiment failed to get you further than appealing to minority and private sensibilities, when prostrating yourself before the Great Lie was not, in the worldly sense, a far better bet than standing up for Truth—an act which, in previous times as now, could be positively fatal. That is how the world was, is, and ever shall be.

Yet the conscientious writer, thinker, or artist—the so-called “intellectual”—today finds himself in a compromised position in his relation to society in general, and to his fellow intellectuals in particular, that must be as historically unprecedented as it is precarious. In our age of universal primary and secondary education, compounded by mass educa-



tion at the college and university levels, perhaps a quarter of the population have a claim to call themselves intellectuals of a sort, and to some degree or another. Moreover, conferment of the coveted appellation “intellectual” (the modern equivalent of an aristocratical title in previous times) is infallibly determined by the content of a person’s thought rather than by the quality of his thinking. To describe someone as an intellectual is not to identify his occupation but rather the social class, determined by his education, to which he belongs. Thus, the modern intellectual’s social milieu is his professional audience as well, a powerful determinant of what he thinks and what he says—and what he thinks he ought to think and say, as well. The same goes, of course, for his friends, family, and audience: they know what he should be thinking and saying—and what they ought to hear from him, aloud and in print—even before it occurs to him to think and say it.

## WHATEVER **TRUTH** MIGHT TURN OUT TO BE **IN THE LONG RUN**, IN THE SHORT TERM IT IS **WHATEVER WINS THE WAR** ON TERMS MOST FAVORABLE TO THE VICTOR.

As a young man, I was immensely confident that mass propaganda, including mass education, could never succeed in conditioning hundreds of millions of people to think and react, not just on command but reflexively, in predetermined ways. I have never been more wrong about anything—excepting, perhaps, my adolescent confusion of conservatism with Republicanism. Indeed, the program of indoctrination has succeeded to the point where the brainwashed masses, victims all of somnambulistic hypnopaedia, are convinced themselves that they truly are educated people! The situation brings to mind Stan Laurel in the role of the handyman at Oxford who starts talking

and acting like a college don after receiving a blow to the head from a descending window sash.

The new, bantam-grade eggheads have been effectively conditioned to reject both the message and the messenger whenever and wherever they fail to match exactly with every received expectation and preconception. For this reason, the pressures exerted upon serious men and women of intellect to conform to the demands made upon them are simply terrific.

Partisans in the so-called Culture War have been insisting for a quarter-century now that every intellectual choose his side, declare himself for Progress or Reaction, Enlightenment or Ignorance, Humanity or Inhumanity, Superstition or Religion, the Glorious Future or the Benighted Past, Freedom or Slavery. In this war, neutrality on the part of any member of the intellectual class has become intolerable. What is more, a general acceptance of the hoary motto of

classical times, are not irrelevant only, they are positively subversive of the war effort.

Whatever Truth might turn out to be in the long run, in the short term it is whatever wins the war on terms most favorable to the victor. Truth, for the time being, is simply effective propaganda, whose confection and dissemination is recognized to be the true work of the intellectual, whether one is talking about Alan Dershowitz or William Kristol. Obviously, this, again, is nothing new under the sun. The dedication of mind to the realization of utilitarian ends predetermined by ideology and forwarded by tendentious argument became standard practice not very long before the word “intellectual” was coined to describe people who think that way. Even so, the notion of the man of intellect as truth-teller has never been as ignored and discredited as in this opening decade of the 21st century.

The modern intellectual is encouraged to abandon and dishonor his true metier by temptations of the negative as well as of the positive sort. Either way, they are formidable inducements. On the one hand, there is the nearly certain prospect that the determination to tell the truth as he sees it, always and everywhere, will lose him close and important friends, alienate powerful people, deprive him of influence, put a luxurious and even, perhaps, comfortable life beyond his means, and end by making him a pariah among his fellow men.

On the other, there is the only somewhat less certain chance that a readiness to tell the truth as the world sees it—or wants it seen—will win him fortune, fame, praise, intimacy with the rich and powerful, and, very likely, a degree of power itself. Never have the rewards inherent in the intellectual life loomed so stupendously; never has the failure to acquire them appeared so disappointing and ignominious. Why, in a



world that so frankly and shamelessly believes in nothing beyond success, should the man of intellect squander his life in defense of that something in which no one but ignoramuses and hypocrites professes to believe and that has only scorn, contempt, impotence, and relative poverty to offer as reward?

So far I have had in mind the choice confronted by public intellectuals, yet the same goes for painters, poets, novelists, composers, screenplay writers, sculptors, architects, philosophers, theologians, men of the cloth. All these, equally with pundits, scholars, commentators,

natural as it is tragical. It must be resisted, and there is one way, and only one, to do it. That is for the conscientious intellectual to make a serious examination, not of himself alone, but of the nature and meaning of the pursuit to which he has been called.

This is no easy job. Fortunately, it has already been accomplished, once and for all, in a small work of genius published long ago in 1920—*The Intellectual Life: Its Spirit, Conditions, Methods*, by A.D. Sertillanges, O.P. For Père Sertillanges, the intellectual is not self-begotten: “he is the son of the Idea, of

Sertillanges is not suggesting that thinkers and artists should waste their lives on futile and irrelevant work. Rather he argues, with Aristotle, that the end of intellectual endeavor is the work itself, not the accidental rewards that may (or may not) accrue from it. In the end, true work is always important work, valuable in ways that “significant,” “important,” and “relevant” pseudo-work—meretricious work—can never be.

Do you want to have a humble share in perpetuating wisdom amongst men, in gathering up the inheritance of the ages, in formulating the rules of the mind for the present time, in turning men’s wandering eyes towards first causes and their hearts toward supreme ends, in reviving if necessary some dying flame, in organizing the propaganda of truth and goodness? That is the lot reserved for you. It is surely worth a little extra sacrifice; it is worth steadily pursuing with jealous passion.

In our world of hype, Philistinism, self-promotion, and devotion to the Great Lie, whose sole standards of achievement and excellence are short-run influence and financial success, the thing needs saying, if only with the aim of instilling courage and hope in the souls of that tiny remnant still dedicated to honest thought and the apparently thankless work that results from it. Whoever and wherever they may be, they are doing heroic work—writing on the crystalline face of the universe with a diamond pen—and they owe it to themselves to recognize its value, if only so that they may persevere to accomplish more of it in the future. ■

*Chilton Williamson Jr. is Editor for Books at Chronicles and the author of The Conservative Bookshelf.*

## THE PSEUDO-INTELLECTUAL, THE PANDERING ENTERTAINER PASSING HIMSELF OFF AS AN ARTIST, LIKE THE RICH MAN GETS HIS REWARD ON EARTH.

“experts,” and specialists of every kind, are faced on a daily basis with the Great Decision either in large or in small: whether to commit themselves to honest, disinterested, and conscientious work—or work that, by its calculated mediocrity or meretriciousness, gets noticed, makes a splash, and earns fame, fortune, and influence for its creator.

The pseudo-intellectual, the pandering entertainer passing himself off as an artist, like the rich man gets his reward on earth. We need not concern ourselves here with him. Far more dangerous than temptation to the man of genuine intellect is the threat of demoralization the modern world offers him. Though there is of course no way of knowing, it seems unlikely that even the staunchest and most loyal devotee of Truth and Beauty is utterly impervious to the danger, which implies a further temptation of its own: the fatal despair that produces a sense of intellectual, artistic, and moral failure, the suspicion that one has accomplished nothing, that one has thrown one’s life away and is thereby guilty of mortal sin. The temptation is as

the Truth, of the creative Word, the Life-giver immanent in his creation.” In his preface to the 1946 edition, he adverts to

the testimony of innumerable letters: some thanking me for the technical help I gave to intellectual workers; others for the ardour that they said had been aroused in young or older hearts; the greater number for what seemed to the reader a revelation precious above all,—that of the spiritual climate proper to the awakening of the thinker, to his evolution, his progress, his inspiration, his work.

Reading the book for oneself, it is easy to understand these testimonies. For the serious thinker, the book is both deep consolation and vaunting inspiration. Whoever aspires to the status of “intellectual worker”—a term incomparably better than the pretentious “intellectual”—has, it seems to me, a kind of moral obligation to read this work, as he is morally obliged to have a care for his soul or to go for a physical exam every year. The life you save may be your own.

# Reach Out and Tap Someone

The NSA's surveillance program undermines the rule of law without producing real gains in security.

By James Bovard

THE NATIONAL SECURITY Agency has been tracking the calls of millions of Americans and constructing the "largest database ever assembled in the world," *USA Today* revealed on May 10. The nation's biggest telephone companies have apparently turned over masses of personal records to the feds, allowing Uncle Sam to build up a database of the phone numbers of incoming and outgoing calls of Americans. The revelations blew to smithereens the Bush administration's story that only international calls were being tapped without a warrant as part of its so-called "terrorist-surveillance program."

Bush announced on the day the story came out, "The intelligence activities I authorized are lawful." However, this may be the result of Cheney logic—that the Supreme Commander has the right to do whatever he feels necessary to protect the public. (The *New York Times* noted that Cheney and his top aides had been the most aggressive advocates of warrantless wiretaps and rounding up Americans' phone data.)

In his weekly radio address two days later, Bush sought to quell the controversy: "This week, new claims have been made about other ways we are tracking down al-Qaeda to prevent attacks on America." Yet unless one considers every American presumptively an al-Qaeda accomplice, the domestic phone intercepts have nothing to do with tracking down al-Qaeda. Bush also declared, "We are not trolling through the personal lives of millions of

innocent Americans." Unless the vast majority of Americans are guilty, there is no way to assert that the feds are not trolling through millions of innocent people's lives.

The revelations buttress the claims of former AT&T employee Mark Klein, who revealed that equipment was attached to AT&T core operations that empowered the NSA to conduct "vacuum-cleaner surveillance of all the data crossing the Internet." The Electronic Freedom Foundation (EFF) sued AT&T after Klein made his charges and after the *New York Times* disclosed that the NSA has been conducting warrantless wiretaps on thousands of Americans. In a deposition, Klein related, "In 2003 AT&T built 'secret rooms' hidden deep in the bowels of its central offices in various cities, housing computer gear for a government spy operation which taps into the company's popular WorldNet service and the entire internet. These installations enable the government to look at every individual message on the internet and analyze exactly what people are doing. Documents showing the hardware installation in San Francisco suggest that there are similar locations being installed in numerous other cities."

The Electronic Communication Privacy Act of 1986 made it a crime for providers of electronics communications to "knowingly divulge a record or other information pertaining to a subscriber or customer ... to any government entity," and companies can face

penalties of \$1,000 for each customer whose privacy was violated. (Qwest was the only major phone company to refuse the government's demand for information—in part because Qwest lawyers and executives recognized that disclosing the information without a court order would be illegal.)

The *USA Today* disclosures make it even more difficult to trust any assertion on surveillance by high-ranking government officials. On Jan. 23, Gen. Michael Hayden, Bush's nominee to be CIA chief, declared that the terrorist-surveillance program "is not a drift net ... This is focused. It's targeted. It's very carefully done. You shouldn't worry." Attorney General Alberto Gonzales told the Senate Judiciary Committee on Feb. 6: "Only international communications are authorized for interception under this program. That is, communications between a foreign country and this country." These comments are reminiscent of Bush's false assertions during the 2004 presidential campaign that no wiretaps were being conducted without a court order.

The administration's credibility is also undermined by its tactics to suppress independent evaluation or investigation of its surveillance. The White House has continuously insisted that its terrorist-surveillance program has been thoroughly reviewed by the Justice Department to determine its legality. (Prior to the Bush administration, the courts, not federal agencies, were supposed to be arbiters of the lawfulness of agencies'

actions.) But on May 10, Congress was notified that the Bush administration had effectively scuttled an investigation by the Justice Department's Office of Professional Responsibility (OPR), the agency's watchdog, into "whether DOJ lawyers had behaved unethically by interpreting the law too aggressively—by giving a legal green light to coercive interrogations and warrantless eavesdropping," as *Newsweek* reported. The Bush administration thwarted the investigation by refusing to grant security clearances to the lawyers investigating the department's actions. Attorney General Gonzales announced that the OPR investigation was unnecessary because the department had already decided the warrantless wiretaps were legal—despite the objections of Deputy Attorney General James Comey and at least one Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court judge. Gonzales explained, "We don't want to be talking so much about the program that we compromise the effectiveness." He offered no evidence that the OPR had been infiltrated by al-Qaeda.

The Bush team is counting on the "national security" invocation to provide a get-out-of-jail card for any abuses. The Justice Department sought to get a federal judge to dismiss much of the EFF lawsuit, claiming that "the lawfulness of the alleged activities cannot be determined without a full factual record, and that record cannot be made without seriously compromising U.S. national security interests." Thus, it is no longer safe to permit Americans to know what the government is up to. National security requires that the government have unlimited right to deceive the American people about how far it is intruding into their lives. EFF lawyer Kevin Bankston observed that the feds are "basically saying that no one could ever go to court to stop illegal surveillance so long as they claim it's for national security. It leaves them completely unaccountable

and leaves the communications companies that are colluding with them unaccountable."

It is amusing to see Republican stalwarts and media stooges pooh-pooh concerns about the feds tracking each citizen's phone calls. But how would the White House react if someone acquired and published all the records of incoming and outgoing calls to Karl Rove? Creating a database of all the phone calls made and taken by members of Congress could be helpful in future bribery and corruption scandals. Yet there is no chance in Hades that representatives and senators would ever permit other Americans to see such personal data—while many congressmen sneer at citizens who don't want the feds to have such data on them.

Unfortunately, most Americans seem incapable of recognizing the danger of permitting politicians and government agents to compile dossiers on their personal lives. According to a *Washington Post*-ABC News poll taken just after the *USA Today* revelation, "63 percent of

housing their phone-call data, this will simply encourage the seizure of far more personal information. (The NSA indicated that the calling data is being shared with other federal agencies.)

The media reaction has been short and relatively mild. This is appalling, considering that the FBI appears to be using National Security Letter subpoenas (authorized by the Patriot Act) to round up the calling data of journalists suspected of having received leaks on CIA abuses. ABC News reporter Brian Ross suggested on his blog that the feds are tracking the calls of numerous newspaper and TV reporters to determine who was receiving leaks from government officials. Perhaps some journalists are afraid to criticize the government or perhaps they fear losing access to government officials—or perhaps they simply don't give a damn.

The latest revelations are not the end of the story. Instead, they are simply one in a series of revelations of the feds ignoring both the statute book and the Constitution. Former NSA intelligence

THE FEDS ARE "BASICALLY SAYING THAT **NO ONE COULD EVER GO TO COURT TO STOP ILLEGAL SURVEILLANCE** SO LONG AS THEY CLAIM IT'S FOR **NATIONAL SECURITY**. IT LEAVES THEM **COMPLETELY UNACCOUNTABLE ...** "

Americans said they found the NSA program to be an acceptable way to investigate terrorism, including 44 percent who strongly endorsed the effort. ... 66 percent said they would not be bothered if NSA collected records of personal calls they had made..." Americans do not understand the implicit Miranda warning on any such surveillance scheme: any information the feds stockpile can be used against people the government does not like—or people the government seeks to silence or suppress. If Americans acquiesce to the feds ware-

officer Russ Tice warned that people "are only seeing the tip of the iceberg" of domestic-surveillance abuses. Seymour Hersh reports in the new issue of *The New Yorker* that a government consultant informed him that "tens of thousands have had their calls monitored in one way or the other," including the use of computers to listen for key words in their conversations.

The roundup of domestic calling records is part of a pattern of aggressive seizures of information by the Bush administration, which successfully pres-



sured America Online and MSN to turn over the records of how millions of people had used their computer search engines. Google resisted similar federal demands, but the feds recently turned up the heat. The Justice Department claims the information is necessary to produce evidence to justify reintroducing the Child Online Protection Act, which has been struck down as unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. Technology expert John Dvorak suggests that it is plausible that the government is gathering up the search histories for purposes unrelated to child-porn crack-downs.

The combination of the phone-call data and the online-search records would go a long way to creating Total Information Awareness (TIA). When the Bush administration first pushed TIA as a ticket to safety in 2002, a public uproar awoke Congress and forced the administration to formally shelve efforts to track almost every area of people's lives. But the feds apparently ignored any congressional orders to cease and desist.

The terrorist surveillance program is the result of a personal edict issued by the president. What other National Security Presidential Directives might Bush have issued? How many laws must be violated before citizens recognize that the government is fundamentally lawless? ■

*James Bovard is the author of the recently released Attention Deficit Democracy and eight other books.*

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## Khaddafi's Carrots

While the Bush administration touts its diplomatic success in Tripoli, it refuses to offer Palestinians a similar package.

**By M.J. Rosenberg**

PERHAPS IT IS BECAUSE I just read a brother's beautiful memoir about one of the Pan Am 103 victims, but I am not overly impressed with the decision to welcome Libya and its leader, Muammar Khaddafi, back into the family of nations. That book tells the story of a young Jewish American, David Dornstein, who was 25 when Libyan agents blew up the plane on which he was returning from Israel by way of London. He died along with 269 other passengers, including 189 Americans. Many were college kids coming home following a semester abroad, four days before Christmas.

But now we are told that all is forgiven. It has, after all, been 18 years since those students, tourists, and business travelers were blown out of that fuselage. Many survived the explosion and the two-minute plunge, only to die on impact. Imagine.

Nevertheless, the Bush administration argues that because Libya has abandoned its nuclear-weapons program, it is a worthy U.S. partner.

It is, no doubt, a good thing that Libya has decided not to develop weapons of mass destruction and especially not nuclear weapons. And it is certainly good news if the Libyans are actually helping in the anti-terrorism struggle. But there is some debate about how advanced Libya's WMD program was to begin with, while there is no debate about the fact that Libya's human-rights record is abysmal. In 2003, the State

Department said it was "unconscionable" that Libya was chairing the UN Human Rights Commission and used its presence, quite rightly, as an argument for abolishing the Commission.

As for terrorism, House International Relations Committee Chairman Henry Hyde has it exactly right: "Libya's continued failure to resolve outstanding claims for past acts of terrorist aggression ... will serve as a stumbling block in the path toward" normalization of relations.

Then there is Khaddafi's anti-Semitism. When he came to power in 1969, Khaddafi confiscated all Jewish property and cancelled all debts owed to Jews. For almost 40 years, Libya has been at the forefront of nations that traffic in both terrorism and virulent anti-Semitism.

But, supposedly, that has now changed. Tom Lantos, ranking Democrat on Hyde's committee, who calls himself "the leading voice in Congress for normalizing relations with Libya," thinks so. Welcoming the Bush administration's Libyan policy, Lantos said, "The world is a far safer place as a result of these actions. I hope that rogue states such as Syria and Iran will learn the lesson: responsible behavior means much better relations with the United States." Lantos conceded that there are still problems with Libya, but "establishing full diplomatic relations" as a first step will "open up more avenues for action on these matters...."

Wait a minute. The United States, and particularly Congress, never applies that

kind of common-sense logic to the Palestinians. Even when Mahmoud Abbas was in power, he was told that before we even considered addressing his needs, he would first have to implement a laundry list of reforms reaching into every aspect of Palestinian affairs—and then U.S. auditors would certify that he actually did what he promised.

Lantos was one of the leading members of Congress demanding that Palestine evolve into a veritable Vermont before he would even consider allowing the president to ask Israel to ease the burdens of the occupation. Libya, on the other hand, gets what it wants first as an incentive for further good behavior.

Why is it that oil-rich Libya is forgiven for committing one of the worst crimes ever perpetrated against Americans while the Palestinians—even after the PLO recognized Israel and Mahmoud Abbas ended the intifada—are repeat-

were still maps in social-studies texts that didn't show Israel.

During the year between Abbas's election and the predictable Hamas win (predictable because you didn't have to be Metternich or Kissinger to understand that if Abbas could not "deliver," he would be displaced by Hamas), neither the United States nor Israel did very much at all to help him succeed. Prime Minister Sharon, though proclaiming him a "partner," refused to negotiate with him.

As for Hamas, under legislation now pending in Congress, in order for the Palestinian Authority to qualify for relations with and aid from the United States, it would have to publicly acknowledge Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state, purge from its security services individuals with ties to terrorism, dismantle all terrorist infrastructure, confiscate unauthorized weapons,

perhaps appropriately, we are looking the other way.

I will not argue that we should do the same with Hamas. Unlike Libya, Hamas has not abandoned terrorism. But Libya did not reform in a day either. The United States worked for years to encourage changes in Tripoli. But the same government officials who adopted such a generous attitude toward Libya are vigorously promoting legislation which simply punishes Palestinians without in any way encouraging the Palestinian regime to evolve.

Were all the carrots eaten by Libyans? Was all the ability to see nuance in complicated international situations used up?

Right now, the Israeli government is closely following a serious debate within Hamas about if, and how, it could meet international conditions relating to accommodation with Israel. And, as Prime Minister Olmert has said, Israel is devising ways to provide essential aid directly to the Palestinian people while bypassing Hamas. As he has said again and again, Israel does not want innocent Palestinians to suffer; he simply wants essential aid to get to Palestinians without going through Hamas. But Congress is utterly indifferent, busily crafting bills to penalize all Palestinians whether identified with Hamas or not. Luckily, the Knesset takes a more humane approach.

Again the difference between the treatment of Libya and of the Palestinians is striking. Muammar Khaddafi's rantings were regularly scanned for positive aspects by an oil-hungry Congress and world.

But the Palestinians have got nothing to sell. Nothing, except maybe peace and security for Israel, and vastly improved U.S. standing in the Middle East. ■

*M.J. Rosenberg is Director of the Israel Policy Forum's Washington office and a former editor of AIPAC's Near East Report.*

## UNLIKE LIBYA, HAMAS HAS NOT ABANDONED TERRORISM. BUT LIBYA DID NOT REFORM IN A DAY EITHER.

edly given a list of hoops they must jump through if they are to achieve any semblance of normalization of relations with the United States, let alone an independent state?

I am not referring to Hamas. I am referring to the Palestinian Authority when it was run by President Mahmoud Abbas. Every time some imam in Hebron gave a nasty anti-Semitic speech, legions of representatives and senators issued statements of denunciation of Abbas for not controlling the clergy. If Abbas's enemies planted a bomb, Abbas was blamed for not successfully disarming enemies who had more firepower than Abbas had. After Abbas cleaned up Palestinian textbooks to delete anti-Semitic references, he was told that his efforts were not good enough; there

arrest and bring terrorists to justice, destroy unauthorized arms factories, thwart and pre-empt terrorist attacks, fully co-operate with Israel's security services, halt anti-Israel incitement in media, schools, and mosques (and replace these materials, including textbooks, with materials that promote tolerance, peace, and coexistence with Israel), ensure democracy, the rule of law, and an independent judiciary, and guarantee the financial transparency and accountability of all government ministries and operations. The president would have to certify that all of the above conditions are met.

Needless to say, those requirements are not being imposed on Libya. For now, focusing on Libya's failings does not serve American interests and so,

# Dynasty Through Diversity

Why the Bush administration is so adamant about amnesty

By Steve Sailer

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH paid lip service to toughening border enforcement in his May 15 speech on illegal immigration. Yet his showcase recommendation of sending 6,000 National Guardsmen to the Mexican frontier would merely station, on a 24/7 basis, one man about every 2.5 miles. And anyway, as Bush admitted, "Guard units will not be involved in direct law-enforcement activities."

The president displayed more genuine enthusiasm for promoting the remarkably lax Senate immigration bill, which Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation estimated would bring in 103 million new immigrants over the next 20 years. (It has since been amended down to merely 66 million newcomers.) The impact of such rapid, radical change on working-class wages, public-school quality, affirmative action, social tranquility, and the popularity of political correctness would be dire.

The president's patent insincerity about controlling illegal immigration has catalyzed the realization among a growing number of conservatives that the Bush administration's governing principles, such as they are, are at best only superficially conservative. Their common denominator is a lack of what Edmund Burke emphasized as a key conservative virtue: prudence.

The foreign, domestic, and economic policies of President Bush can be summarized as: invade the world, invite the world, in hock to the world. As far as grand strategies go, this is not the most seamless. There are palpable contradic-

tions in combining pugnacity abroad with welcoming tens of millions of foreign newcomers at home while borrowing hundreds of billions from overseas to fund our budget and trade deficits.

How did the Bush administration wind up with such clashing priorities?

The orgy of indebtedness with which the administration is saddling future generations of Americans is a byproduct of the president's politically motivated profligacy. Increasing spending is popular among powerful interest groups. And so is cutting taxes. Why not do both at once? Why pay today what you can put off until tomorrow—or the next president's term?

More mysterious remain the precise reasons behind the administration's conversion from its 2000 campaign promise of a "humble" foreign policy that abstained from nation-building to its wildly ambitious neoconservative ideology of 2003.

In contrast, Bush's desire to boost immigration has never been in doubt. While the president contended in his speech that his terms as a border-state governor prove that he grasps the importance of enforcing illegal-immigration laws, never during his 12 years in office has he displayed much eagerness to catch aliens.

The "comprehensive immigration reform" of 1986 granted amnesty to 2.7 million illegal aliens combined with staunch employer sanctions to eliminate the incentive for future illegal immigration. Unfortunately, politically powerful employers soon began corrupting the

enforcement process. Still, the nadir of negligence was not reached until this administration. In 2004, only three employers were fined.

In the placid months before 9/11, Bush's highest priority, after tax cuts, was working out with Mexican president Vicente Fox an immigration deal—although what he asked Fox to sacrifice, if anything, was never made clear. The president of Mexico wanted to dispose of his surplus uneducated poor, and the president of the United States wanted to acquire them, perhaps on the theory that global dominance in the 21st century goes to the country with the most manual laborers.

Then 9/11 demonstrated that open borders were a dangerously naïve fantasy, so Bush put his Mexican immigration quest on the backburner until January 2004. When his combination of an amnesty that we aren't supposed to call an amnesty and a jaw-droppingly unlimited guest-worker program was rejected by House Republicans as political suicide, Bush bided his time until the Senate took up his favorite subject this year.

Why does Bush long for more immigration? Good question. The motivation of Bush's close ally in this quest, Sen. Ted Kennedy, who also introduced the epochal 1965 immigration liberalization legislation and the 1990 Diversity Visa Lottery bill, has always been obvious: more immigrants mean more Democratic voters. For a Republican politician, though, the rationalizations have to be more subtle—or possibly just more confused.



First, advocating an even larger influx of Mexican laborers has been an easy way for the president to win the plaudits of the press as a “new kind” of Republican (i.e., not a racist, like all those old Republicans). While Bush has not put much effort into uncovering the facts about immigration, relying more on his gut instincts, neither has the media. A carefree inattention about the long-term impact of illegal immigration is the stylish attitude in the upper reaches of American life, signifying that one’s social position is safely above drab blue-collar concerns about aliens’ effects on wages, neighborhood crime, and public schools.

Second, the president’s desire to make America more like Mexico has deep personal roots. While Mexico strikes most of us as a nice place to visit but too impoverished, corrupt, violent, and class-ridden for us to want to live there, the president knows just how sweet life is for those on top of the steep Mexican social pyramid. Alan Riding explained in his 1984 book, *Distant Neighbors: A Portrait of the Mexicans*, in Mexico, “Public life could be defined as the abuse of power to achieve wealth and the abuse of wealth to achieve power.”

The Bush clan’s close ties with the Mexican ruling class have garnered strikingly little attention, in part because the press increasingly views criticism, or even objective depiction, of Mexico’s lurid political culture as vaguely anti-immigrant and racist. But Bush family links with Mexican power-brokers go back to 1960, when George H.W. Bush formed an oil drilling partnership with Jorge Diaz Serrano, who went on to head Mexico’s oil monopoly, Pemex. In 1981, Vice President Bush told *People*, “I have high regard for Jorge. I consider him a friend.” Serrano, however, was crooked, even by Mexican standards, and shortly afterwards he was sentenced to five years in prison for embezzling \$58 million.

The Bushes became intimate with the notorious Salinas family during President Carlos Salinas’s kleptocratic 1988-1994 reign. Jeb Bush, now the governor of Florida, vacationed three times at the hacienda of Carlos’s brother Raul, the bagman who was known throughout Mexico as “Mr. Ten Percent” for his insistence that all government contractors tithe him a kickback. After Carlos fled to exile in Ireland, Raul was sentenced to 27 years in prison for having their ex-brother-in-law, the chairman of their own party, murdered.

President Bush also has a tie to Mexico through his sister-in-law, Jeb’s Mexican-born wife Columba, who comes from a much lower social stratum. Indeed, she spent several years of her childhood in California, possibly as an illegal alien.

Third, President Bush, son of a president and grandson of a senator, is a conscious dynast. Mario Puzo, author of *The Godfather*, noted, “Any family—nuclear or otherwise—that wants to learn how the game is really played should study the Bush dynasty.” The hopes of the Bush family to extend their reign into the next generation rest on Jeb and Columba’s son, the charismatic 30-year-old lawyer George P. Bush. The president, who calls himself “43” and his father “41,” has labeled George P. “44.” In truth, George P. is too young to become the 44th president, but would be eligible to become the 45th as early as 2012.

While campaigning for his uncle in 2000, George P., whom his presidential grandfather once referred to as one of his “little brown ones,” orated in fluent Spanish, according to Reuters: “This is a president who represents the diversity of our society, who we can count on to change the Republican Party to represent our views.’ ... He told the rally his mother had instilled in him the values of Cesar Chavez... ‘She told me we have to fight for our race, we have to find the leaders who represent us’ ...”

This, then, could be why George W. Bush has spent so much effort promoting a wedge issue that splits his own party: the future of his dynasty demands a new, improved GOP, one that would vote for George P. Bush out of ethnic solidarity. As Bertolt Brecht quipped, “Would it not be easier ... for the government to dissolve the people and elect another?”

“An immigration reform bill needs to be comprehensive, because all elements of this problem must be addressed together or none of them will be solved at all,” said the spider to the fly in his prime-time address. In reality, immigration is a topic as complicated as it is important. The prevailing taboo against discussing it in public using hard-headed facts rather than sentimental clichés has led to the Senate’s unedifying and alarming performance, first taking up an absurdly over-expansive bill, then winging it on one amendment after another.

Rather than a comprehensive bill, simplification is needed. The priority of any illegal immigration legislation should be: first, do no more harm. To prevent the infiltration of more unskilled, uneducated foreigners, America must take control of its borders, through a combination of a full-length fence, employer sanctions, and identification systems. Only then can we afford to consider secondary issues such as amnesties and guest workers.

If we don’t act now, it might soon be too late. Two recent polls by the Pew Hispanic Trust found that over 40 million Mexicans wish to migrate to America. And Mexico is just the tip of the iceberg. Almost five billion people live in countries with average per capita incomes lower than Mexico’s.

Without control of its borders, America will lose control of its fate. ■

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*Steve Sailer is TAC’s film critic and VDARE.com’s Monday morning columnist.*

# A New Democrat

Jim Webb's populist Senate campaign shakes up Virginia's political establishment.

By W. James Antle III

TO JIM WEBB'S most enthusiastic supporters, this is no ordinary campaign. Ask why their candidate should win the Democratic nomination to challenge Virginia Republican Sen. George Allen, and you won't just hear where he stands on the minimum wage or the usual "man of integrity" superlatives. Instead Webb is presented as a kind of folk hero, equal parts Andrew Jackson, Theodore Roosevelt, Harry Truman, and—at least among his more conservative backers—Ronald Reagan.

Even typically cynical political observers have been starstruck. Since entering the race this spring, Webb has joked around on Comedy Central's "The Colbert Report" and "live blogged" on the popular Daily Kos website. What do liberal bloggers see in Webb, a former Republican appointee and stalwart defender of the American mission during the Vietnam War?

"He can help revitalize the Democratic Party with a jolt of Andrew Jackson populism and Teddy Roosevelt reform," says Lowell Feld, proprietor of the Virginia-based Raising Kaine site. "He can bring people—Reagan Democrats, cultural conservatives, Southerners—back into the Democratic fold and help rebuild the big tent." Just as important, Webb has the military credentials to make his strong opposition to the Iraq War, the central plank of his campaign platform, less vulnerable to Republican attack. While Allen is famous for his cowboy boots, Webb wears combat boots—those of his son, who is scheduled to be deployed to Iraq this summer.

That is why Webb's big tent includes some liberal Democrats holding elected office in Northern Virginia. Arlington County Revenue Commissioner Ingrid Morroy has strongly endorsed him. "I support Jim Webb for two reasons," she says. "One is that he can beat George Allen. The second is that he is really the more progressive candidate. He is a populist."

Webb's biography is impressive enough to make all this praise seem less hyperbolic. A 1968 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, where he was a varsity boxer, he served as a Marine officer in Vietnam. Twice wounded, he earned the Navy Cross, the Silver Star medal, two Bronze Stars, and two Purple Hearts. Webb went on to collect a law degree from Georgetown, serve as counsel to the House Veterans Affairs Committee, receive appointments as assistant defense secretary and secretary of the Navy in the Reagan administration, win an Emmy Award, and pen six bestselling novels.

"This isn't a guy who has spent his whole life running for office," one Webb supporter says approvingly. Richmond tax attorney J.C. Wilmore also emphasizes biography as a reason for Webb's appeal. "You get the feeling you can get to know Jim," he says. These attributes have not gone unnoticed by national Democrats. Seven current and former senior Democratic senators, including Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid, recently endorsed Webb, a move that suggests they believe he is a candidate who could beat the Republican Allen in the general election.

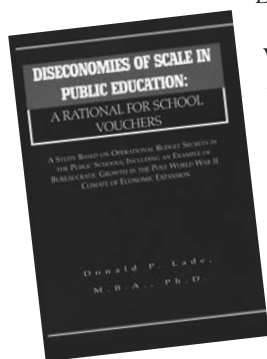
But first Webb must defeat former lobbyist Harris Miller in the June 13 Democratic primary. Miller has deep roots in the state party, spent six years as chairman of the Fairfax County Democratic Committee, and has a slight edge in local endorsements. With an earlier start, he has also raised more money—\$540,000 as of April to Webb's \$260,000—and has more cash on hand. Technocratic and wonkish, Miller doesn't have his opponent's engaging personality or oratorical flare. What he does have is just as important, however: longstanding political alliances and a geographic base in vote-rich Northern Virginia.

Miller's strategy is to paint Webb as an inauthentic Democrat being foisted on the electorate by non-Virginians. To lessen the impact of Webb's many national endorsements, Miller's spokesman likes to say, "Most of the people who have endorsed [Miller] can vote in the Virginia primary." The Miller campaign has also mined Webb's extensive writings and public statements for deviations from liberal orthodoxy while playing up his past Republican associations.

The thought crimes include an essay in which Webb described racial preferences as "state-sponsored racism" comparable to Jim Crow, a revelation worth several endorsements for Miller from black state legislators. But Webb's actual views on the subject are less conservative than this single quotation makes them appear. His campaign says he supports affirmative action to remedy past discrimination against

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black Americans but is critical of diversity programs that don't take into consideration the socioeconomic conditions of poor whites, especially in areas like the Appalachians. Disclosures that Webb wasn't sufficiently enthusiastic about either Bill Clinton or women in combat seem to have had less impact.

Webb's shifting partisan allegiances are well documented. He swung to the GOP due to his disgust with the post-Vietnam Democratic Party, recently telling George Will that Jimmy Carter's decision to pardon the draft evaders was pivotal, but was never a Republican regular. He supported Bob Kerrey's bid for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1992 and endorsed Democratic Sen. Chuck Robb over Oliver North in 1994 only to back George Allen over Robb in 2000.

Yet Iraq is the single biggest factor that drove Webb from the Republican Party. It is difficult to see how Webb's Iraq prescience—he was antiwar long before the invasion—helps Miller. Memories of the 2000 Allen endorsement may fade after 11 former senior staffers to Robb announced their support for Webb. And Miller's own background as president of the Information Technology Association of America (ITAA) provides opposition researchers just as much fodder as Webb's voting history and writing portfolio.

As ITAA head, Miller made financial contributions to six Republicans, including House Speaker Dennis Hastert. "Speaker Hastert gets IT," he told an Internet news service. In ITAA-issued press releases, Miller called for the extension of President Bush's tax cuts, a move he now opposes. He also gave an interview to the *Orlando Business Journal* in which he claimed to be doing everything he could to see conservative Republican Sen. Spencer Abraham of Michigan re-elected in 2000. (Abraham lost.)

Miller counters that he only gave money to Republicans because the ITAA board required him to be bipartisan in his giving. Similarly, his campaign justifies his previous tax-cut stance on the grounds that he was only representing his organization's interests, particularly the technology's sector's desire to extend the research-and-development tax credit. But all this makes it more difficult for Miller to claim to be the purer Democrat.

His ITAA tenure was also marked by strenuous support for sending technology jobs overseas through outsourcing and expanding the number of non-immigrant visas available to foreign workers to obtain jobs in the U.S. information-technology labor market. These stands have made him unpopular among IT and union workers and made him as much a villain to his opponent's supporters as Webb is their hero.

"I first became involved in this race because of Miller's record on H-1B and other worker-replacement programs," says anti-outsourcing activist John Pardon. "Then I became very enthusiastic about Jim Webb on his own merits." It was these kinds of activists Webb had in mind when, in their first televised debate, he told Miller, "You have been called the Antichrist of Outsourcing."

The issue resonates with traditional Democrats as well. "These visa programs are exploiting foreign labor and eroding the middle class," says Morroy, who was born in the Netherlands and raised in Suriname. "I'm willing to pay more to see American and immigrant workers treated fairly."

The outcome of this primary fight will have national implications. The most obvious pertain to 2008. If Allen is forced to spend this fall defending his seat or ends up losing, his Republican presidential bid may be derailed. By contrast, a Democratic Senate pickup in Virginia would aid the presidential aspi-

rations of former Gov. Mark Warner, who has held fundraisers for both men. While a Rassmussen poll shows both Webb and Miller trailing Allen badly, a Zogby survey has Webb down by just 7 points—and Allen below the critical 50-percent incumbents' threshold.

Webb's candidacy, if it can attract broad electoral support, may signal the shift of a certain kind of voter away from the Republican Party—the sort of voter exemplified by the Scots-Irish about whom he has written so frequently. When Webb came home from Vietnam, the Democrats were seen as unserious about national security and less culturally congenial to those who serve in the military. Today, Webb is concerned that it is the GOP that has gone crazy on issues of national defense and shows disrespect to veterans with its Swiftboat campaign tactics.

Consider that Webb opposes the Iraq War on conservative-realist grounds and was repulsed by Republican attacks on John Kerry and John Murtha. What if he is not an anomaly but a harbinger? When Webb began his campaign, Mackubin Thomas Owens warned in *National Review Online*, "the Republicans can't afford to lose such people." It would be an irony if the neoconservatives, many of whom fled the Democratic Party because of its increasingly dovish military stances, ended up making the Republican Party as abhorrent to pro-defense voters as the nuclear-freeze movement of old.

As a first-time candidate, Webb has his flaws. His appeal to culturally conservative voters may be mitigated by his attacks on the Religious Right and strong pro-choice, pro-gay-rights stands; his positions on domestic issues lack specificity. But Webb supporters are already looking ahead to November. "A poseur in cowboy boots versus a war hero in combat boots," forecasts Wilmore. "I can't wait." ■

# Prophets in Their Own Land

How to go from respected academic to anti-Semite—in one simple step

By Michael C. Desch

JOHN MEARSHEIMER and Stephen Walt's *London Review of Books* essay "The Israel Lobby," and the heavily footnoted working-paper version posted on the John F. Kennedy School of Government website, have generated a tsunami of commentary. This is not surprising given their thesis: a small group of Israel's supporters inside and outside of government have a disproportionate influence over American foreign policy toward the Middle East, and this works to the detriment of U.S. security. As with many prophets in their own lands, they have received a much fairer hearing abroad—ironically even in Israel—than they have at home.

Mearsheimer and Walt have impeccable establishment credentials. They are leading international-relations scholars and members of the prestigious American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Mearsheimer, a distinguished professor of political science at the University of Chicago, is a West Point graduate who served in the Air Force before retreating behind ivy-covered walls. Walt will step down this summer after three years as academic dean of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government—despite much speculation, a move planned long before the furor—but retains the chair at Harvard he assumed after previous positions at Princeton and Chicago.

Both wrote about the Arab-Israeli conflict in fairly conventional terms in their early work and have only recently become concerned with the influence of the Israel lobby on American foreign policy.

In Israel, the debate has been vigorous but balanced. Some Israeli commentators have been critical: a column in the *Jerusalem Post* characterized the piece as a "compendium of every slander and innuendo that's ever been aired about the supposedly pernicious influence of supporters of Israel on US foreign policy." But many Israeli commentators have echoed the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz's* editorial line: "it would be irresponsible to ignore the article's serious and disturbing message." Former Ehud Barak advisor Daniel Levy admitted that the piece was "strong in substance," if "lacking in nuance." *Ha'aretz* columnist Tom Segev carped about the piece but conceded that Mearsheimer and Walt "are also correct in the most important argument in their essay."

To be sure, not all foreign commentators have accepted their argument. But typical of the response in Europe was an editorial in London's *Financial Times* deploring how critics attacked Mearsheimer and Walt rather than engaging their argument. "This," the *FT* lamented, "is a shame and a self-inflicted wound no society built on freedom should allow." Writing from Paris, *International Herald Tribune* columnist William Pfaff dubbed the piece "a responsible document of public importance." British-born historian Tony Judt, himself no stranger to the lobby's wrath, reminded readers of the *New York Times* that a lobby is not a conspiracy. English journalist and historian of Zionism Geoffrey Wheatcroft attributed the more favorable reception of the argument in

Europe to the fact that "on the eastern side of the Atlantic, it has long been recognized that there is an intimate connection between the United States and Israel, in which AIPAC clearly plays a major role." And even in the face of withering criticism, *LRB* editor Mary-Kay Wilmers stood by her decision to publish the piece and rejected the notion that "criticising US foreign policy, or Israel's way of going about influencing it, is anti-Semitic."

One might wonder why the "The Israel Lobby" was published in a British rather than an American magazine. Things began promisingly enough when *The Atlantic Monthly* commissioned Mearsheimer and Walt to write the piece in 2002. After submitting the first draft in May 2004, they worked closely with the editors on the substance and organization. There was some discussion about how big a role the story of the Israel lobby should play, and the authors acceded to *The Atlantic's* request to pare down that part of the argument and submitted the final draft in January 2005. Despite a long letter from the editors outlining their dissatisfaction, Mearsheimer and Walt still aren't sure why *The Atlantic* declined to publish the piece. Whatever the reason, to the magazine's credit someone associated with it played an indirect role in getting the piece published in the *LRB*. It appeared online March 16.

The first significant press coverage came in the *New York Sun*, a neoconservative paper backed by wealthy Israel supporters Conrad Black and Michael

Steinhardt. Reporter Eli Lake wrote the article around an interview he did with white-supremacist David Duke, not normally a regular source for the *Sun*, who not surprisingly claimed “The Israel Lobby” vindicated his long-held anti-Semitic views.

Lake’s colleague Meghan Clyne followed up four days later with an extended interview with Harvard Law School professor Alan Dershowitz, who among other smears insinuated that Walt and Mearsheimer cribbed some of their choicest quotes from neo-Nazi websites. (Most of the *Sun*’s readership likely missed the irony that Dershowitz himself has been accused of this form of plagiarism in his book *The Case for Israel*.) Between the *Sun* and the *Harvard Crimson* arose an almost daily drumbeat of criticism.

These two charges—that “The Israel Lobby” gave aid and comfort to extremists like David Duke and that it parroted material on anti-Semitic websites—quickly made their way into the national media through two articles in the *Washington Post*, one running under the incendiary title “Of Israel, Harvard, and

est.” But Mearsheimer and Walt quote a candid speech that Bush intelligence adviser Philip Zelikow gave on Sept. 10, 2002 in which he said that Iraq was an imminent threat to Israel, not America. It was, he said, “the threat that dare not speak its name,” because it was not a “popular sell.”

On March 24, *The Forward* reported that officials of major Jewish organizations were trying to avoid “a frontal debate with the two scholars, while at the same time seeking indirect ways to rebut and discredit the scholar’s arguments.” These included demands by some Jewish donors to Harvard to distance the university from the piece. (There is no evidence these worked, as the decision to remove Harvard’s logo from the working paper was made with Walt’s approval.) Certain neoconservatives also lobbied financial backers of prominent journals to have Mearsheimer and Walt dropped from their editorial boards. Finally, there were thinly veiled appeals to other Jewish colleagues to exclude Mearsheimer and Walt from conferences and other scholarly activities so as to “leave them marginalized and isolated.” This bare-knuckled

it was having around the world. Colleagues traveling in the Middle East reported that “The Israel Lobby” was the talk of Arab and Muslim elites. I can confirm from a recent trip to Europe that it remains a hot topic of conversation on the Continent.

In fact, the lobby’s efforts to stifle the piece by ignoring it publicly while working behind the scenes to attack Mearsheimer and Walt’s integrity and credibility may already be backfiring. University of Michigan Middle East historian Juan Cole, another scholar who has felt the lobby’s ire, published a defense of Mearsheimer and Walt on Salon.com and is circulating a petition among Middle East specialists calling upon the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations to repudiate the charges of anti-Semitism. The *New York Times*, which initially ignored the piece, broke its silence on April 12 and ran a balanced article on the controversy followed by the long opinion piece by Judt. After weeks of reporting the negative aspects of the story, the *Washington Post* ran a column by Richard Cohen repudiating Eliot Cohen’s charge of anti-Semitism. In *The Nation*, Phil Weiss weighed in with an account that quoted more defenders (full disclosure: including me) than critics of “The Israel Lobby.” Reportedly, there are more pieces in the pipeline that will offer favorable reviews.

But while the political winds may be shifting in America, the Israel lobby continues to constrain discussion of the U.S.-Israel relationship. On the face of it, there’s no good intellectual reason for the differences in the reactions to the piece abroad and at home. Writing in *The New Republic*, Josef Joffe dismissed Mearsheimer and Walt’s critique as “anti-American.” But there is nothing unseemly about studying the influence of small groups of highly motivated and like-minded individuals and organizations upon American policy. After all, concern

## NEOCONSERVATIVES ALSO LOBBIED FINANCIAL BACKERS OF PROMINENT JOURNALS TO HAVE MEARSHEIMER AND WALT DROPPED FROM THEIR EDITORIAL BOARDS.

David Duke.” The *Post* also ran an opinion piece by Bush administration Defense Policy Board member Eliot Cohen pointedly entitled, “Yes, It’s Anti-Semitic.” This set the tone for much of the early discussion of the piece in the American media.

Writing in *U.S. News and World Report*, longtime White House insider David Gergen, like Captain Renault in “Casablanca,” professed to be shocked to learn that the Israel lobby is working to “tilt U.S. foreign policy in favor of Israel at the expense of America’s inter-

maneuvering by lobby members shows why most people in the U.S. steer clear of criticizing the U.S.-Israeli relationship publicly.

Despite these efforts to shut off discussion, “The Israel Lobby” ricocheted like a pinball around the Internet. I ran a Google search on the terms “mearsheimer + lobby” on the day the piece came out and have checked its progress daily since then. As of mid-May, it had generated nearly 300,000 hits. While not all of these link to discussions of the piece, this figure gives some sense of the immense impact



that factions “who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, [might be] adverse ... to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community” dates back to James Madison’s famous *Federalist* No. 10. The study of interest-group influence upon American politics has been a staple of American political science in such classic works as Theodore Lowi’s *The End of Liberalism* and E.E. Schattschneider’s *The Semisovereign People*.

If one were to take Mearsheimer and Walt’s description of how the Israel lobby operates and substitute “gun” or “tobacco,” it would hardly be controversial. The National Rifle Association and the rest of the gun lobby routinely engage in behind-the-scenes maneuvering in Washington, D.C., channel financial support to friendly politicians, target those they see as hostile, and disseminate self-serving propaganda to advance their agenda. Few outside that lobby would regard pointing this out as beyond the pale of legitimate debate.

Other critics charge that Mearsheimer and Walt impugn the patriotism of American Jews. But this is a red herring. At no point do Mearsheimer and Walt question anyone’s loyalty. As a nation of immigrants, many of us have multiple loyalties to some extent. The key thing is that we should not pretend that we do not have them. Nor should we deny that on occasion our loyalties conflict. When they do, it is better to confront them directly. The burden of proof ought to be on supporters of Israel, or any other country, to prove that their policies also benefit the United States.

It is understandable that Jews and others would be hypersensitive to arguments that suggest a small group is slanting our Mideast policy in the interest of the Jewish state. In the past, anti-Semites have charged Jewish groups with behind-the-scenes scheming and have questioned the loyalty of individual

Jews. Often this was the precursor to disenfranchisement and even murderous persecution, as Mearsheimer and Walt are well aware. But a fair reading of their piece makes clear that the Israel lobby is not a Jewish conspiracy. There are, to be sure, Jews in the Israel lobby, but the Israel lobby is not, at least in Mearsheimer and Walt’s formulation, a strictly Jewish lobby. It is not a monolithic force but rather a loose coalition of like-minded people—Christian Zionists, opportunistic gentile politicians, uncompromising Jewish community

hardly surprising that the topic would not be something they would have much interest in seeing debated.

Moreover, the leadership of the lobby consists in part of gentile politicians such as former CIA Director James Woolsey, former Education Secretary William Bennett, and U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations John Bolton, who are strong supporters of Israel for political reasons. Some believe that Israel is a strategic asset, others feel a moral commitment to a fellow democracy that is the haven for survivors of the Holocaust, still others

**THE BURDEN OF PROOF OUGHT TO BE ON SUPPORTERS OF ISRAEL, OR ANY OTHER COUNTRY, TO PROVE THAT THEIR POLICIES ALSO BENEFIT THE UNITED STATES.**

leaders, and a reflexively pro-Israel American Jewish community. The problem “The Israel Lobby” highlights is not a cabal of the sort concocted in *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* but just another example of good old American interest-group politics run amok.

Indeed, rather than Jews, the largest constituent of the lobby, in terms of raw numbers, are evangelical Christians who embrace Christian Zionism. Adherents of this creed believe that God gave the land of Israel to the Jews through his covenant with Abraham in Genesis and that the re-establishment of the state of Israel will herald the coming of the end of days foretold in the Book of Revelation. It is hard to say precisely how many American gentiles embrace the notion that unquestioning support for Israel has divine sanction, but they number in the tens of millions. Televangelist John Hagee recently teamed up with other prominent evangelical leaders, including Jerry Falwell and Gary Bauer, to inaugurate a Christian Israel lobby to add their voices to the pro-Israel chorus in Washington. Since support for Israel is, by their lights, divinely sanctioned, it is

understand that there are political rewards for supporting the Jewish state.

It is, however, among the leadership of the American Jewish community, particularly in the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) and the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, that we find the bulk of the lobby’s leaders. Unfortunately, moderate pro-Israel groups like the Israel Policy Forum and Jewish peace groups like *Brit Tzedek V’Shalom* or Jewish Voice for Peace lack the clout of AIPAC and the Presidents Conference.

A California teenager, Alice Ollstein, recounted her experience with how these organizations inculcate hard-line attitudes among young American Jews in JewishJournal.com. While attending AIPAC’s national conference, she encountered a “carefully manufactured atmosphere of fear and urgency” that was “geared toward persuading the audience that another Holocaust is evident ... unless we get them first.”

On March 28, the same day as Israel’s general election, the Jewish Agency staged a mock election among diaspora college students. These young Jewish

voters, the target of much of AIPAC's attention, gave Likud and other rightist parties a great victory. This hypothetical result stood in marked contrast to the outcome in Israel, where the centrist Kadima and dovish Labor parties, running on platforms that promised unilateral withdrawals from occupied Palestinian territory, trounced the parties of the nationalist Right.

*Ha'aretz's* Bradley Burston has become so disenchanted with hard-line Jewish-American second-guessing of Israeli peace overtures that in a recent column he confessed, "I used to be an American Jew. And then I read Daniel Pipes," the leader of Campus Watch, an organization devoted to purging American universities of Israel-critical sentiments. Admitting that the leadership of the American Jewish community was far more intransigent than most Israelis, former Barak adviser Daniel Levy said, "the pro-Israel position in the United States needs to start approximating more closely just where the debate is in Israel."

As Mearsheimer and Walt note, most of America's six million Jews do not support the Israel lobby's hard-line positions across the board. But on the salience of Israel there is much greater unanimity. According to the American Jewish Committee's 2005 annual survey, 76 percent of respondents said that they felt "very" or "fairly close" to Israel. This broad attachment makes many American Jews eager to tilt U.S. policy in Israel's favor.

Part of the reason is the understandable belief that a Jewish state is their only bulwark against a second Holocaust. In his book *The Holocaust in American Life*, University of Chicago historian Peter Novick traced the increasing prominence of the Holocaust in the identity of American Jews. Writing in *First Things* a few years ago, then *National Review* literary editor David

Klinghoffer confirmed, "for many of us Jews lately, everything and anything is 'remindful of the Holocaust.'" Given this belief, it is not surprising that many American Jews would feel the need to mentally keep "one bag packed" for a hasty departure to Israel.

While religious faith links some Jews to Israel, a lack of faith connects others. As the commitment of many American Jews to Judaism as a faith is waning, some compensate by making support for the state of Israel their "civil religion." "A generation that 'feels Jewish'—often without an accompanying theology or much Jewish education—can embrace the Zionist trinity of peoplehood, history, and homeland," confirms McGill University professor Gil Troy.

## AS THE COMMITMENT OF MANY AMERICAN JEWS TO JUDAISM AS A FAITH IS WANING, SOME COMPENSATE BY MAKING SUPPORT FOR THE STATE OF ISRAEL THEIR "CIVIL RELIGION."

Finally, there seems to be a sense of guilt among some American Jews living in peace and prosperity in the United States that leads them to believe they owe unstinting support to their co-religionists living in greater peril and less opulence in the Middle East. Rather than make literal *aliyah* (ascent to the Holy Land), they content themselves with making political *aliyah* through uncompromising support for the Jewish state. "American (Jews) have this apocalyptic sense of danger in regard to Israel, more than Israeli Jews," Columbia University professor Todd Giltin told the *San Francisco Chronicle*. They therefore "feel a certain guilt that they are American. ... They write the checks, but the Israelis have to fight." One consequence of this, as George Washington University President Stephen Joel Trachtenberg observed, is the "idea, which persists ...

that it was better to keep quiet than to criticize Israel. Doing otherwise, the argument went (and still goes in some places) is no less than giving aid and comfort to Israel's antagonists."

Groups like the Anti-Defamation League and CAMERA and individuals like Alan Dershowitz promised detailed rebuttals of Mearsheimer and Walt's logic and evidence. So far, they have failed to identify any significant errors of fact and interpretation. They are left with impugning the integrity of the authors and the legitimacy of the whole line of inquiry. Dershowitz labels Mearsheimer and Walt "bigots." Anti-Defamation League National Director Abraham Foxman characterizes the piece as "conspiratorial anti-Semitic

analysis." Congressman Jerrold Nadler, a staunch supporter of Israel, dismisses it as "a repackaging of old conspiracy theories." *New Republic* publisher Martin Peretz declares it "the labor of obsessives with dark and conspiratorial minds." Even as he conceded much of their argument, columnist Christopher Hitchens found it "smelly" with the odor of anti-Semitism.

Those charges are demonstrably false. In the fall of 1991, Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, Germany's leading public-opinion specialist, was due to return to the University of Chicago for a faculty appointment when *Commentary* revealed that as a graduate student in Nazi Germany she made anti-Semitic remarks in her dissertation and in the Nazi newspaper *Das Reich*. Noelle-Neumann never denied these charges, and she and her defenders at the university argued that

her comments ought to be seen in the context of the times. Mearsheimer, then chair of the political science department, along with Walt and a few other colleagues, publicly called on Noelle-Neumann to provide a fuller explanation of her behavior along with an unconditional apology for her anti-Semitic comments. This stand is hardly one bigots or anti-Semites are likely to have taken.

And that position was not an aberration. Friends and colleagues understand that Mearsheimer and Walt are acutely aware of the long and painful history of anti-Semitism and in no way intended to give aid and comfort to Israel's enemies. It is not surprising, therefore, that they would rally to the authors' defense. Brandeis University professor Robert Art's reaction was typical: "I have known John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt for over twenty-five years. I consider both good friends and valued colleagues. Neither John nor Steve is anti-Semitic, and both are strong supporters of Israel. It is a cheap shot to call them anti-Semitic and enemies of Israel. As an American Jew, I would never associate with individuals who hold such views."

Despite having no truck with anti-Semitism, Mearsheimer and Walt understood that critics would level that accusation. As Tony Judt recently explained in *Ha'aretz*, the charge of anti-Semitism is "now the only card left" to the Israel lobby to respond to criticism. But this organized tactic of shutting down serious discussion rather than engaging the argument on its merits is illegitimate. As George Orwell reminds us, "If liberty means anything, it means the right to tell people what they don't want to hear." ■

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**The recent surge in violence initiated by the Taliban in Afghanistan is almost certainly linked to the withdrawal of U.S. Special Operations troops and their CIA counterparts**

from the Afghan border province of Pakhtia earlier this spring. U.S. forces were controlling access to and from adjacent Waziristan inside the Pakistani tribal region, where Osama bin Laden is believed to be hiding and the Taliban is known to be present in considerable strength. The Americans have been replaced by Afghan soldiers whose loyalties are best described as mixed and whose ability to interdict hostile movement is questionable. The withdrawal was part of a shift in resources ordered by the White House to strengthen special-ops units already engaged along the Afghan border with Iran. American-supported separatists inside the Baluchistan region of Iran are in search of evidence of nuclear facilities, but they have also been pursuing their own agenda by staging ambushes of government officials and causing other problems for the local administration. The abrupt and ill-advised shift in resources is reminiscent of the transfer of troops out of Afghanistan in the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq, which resulted in the initial failure to finish off the Taliban and al-Qaeda. It might also suggest that a phase of more aggressive military action against Iran is about to begin.



**The story of the Niger uranium forgeries has largely run out of steam in the United States, but the change of government in Italy means that there will likely be a full-scale investigation**

launched in Rome that might actually determine who forged the documents and why. In the latest wrinkle in the case, the Italian media is speculating that at least one Italian company might have received a kickback from the Pentagon both for former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's unswerving support of the White House and for the Niger documents. The reward was a contract to construct the next generation of Marine One helicopters that transport the U.S. president and other high officials. The \$6.1 billion contract for 23 aircraft plus research and development was awarded in January 2005 to AgustaWestland, a company that is wholly owned by Italy's largest arms contractor, Finmeccanica. At that time, the largely state-owned company's deputy chairman, Gianni Castellaneta, was also a top security adviser to Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi. He also reportedly was one of a number of players involved in the transmittal of the Niger documents to Stephen Hadley at the National Security Council, which led to President Bush's famous claim that Iraq was seeking uranium for nuclear weapons. AgustaWestland is the first foreign company to obtain the contract to provide transport for the White House, and it came as a surprise to American helicopter manufacturer Sikorsky, which has supplied presidential helicopters since the 1950s. It also surprised some intelligence analysts, who noted the lack of any due diligence on the contract. AgustaWestland has sold helicopters to countries considered hostile to the United States, including China and Libya, and it has also actively marketed its products in Iran.

*Philip Giraldi, a former CIA Officer, is a partner in Cannistraro Associates.*

# The Blog Ate My Life

Online scribes could be constructing a new medium—or they may be falling victim to the skewed perspectives of the virtual world.

By Diana Moon

I BEGAN A BLOG in February 2002. The ostensible cause was the terrible day of 9/11 and its subsequent events, but the real motive was opportunism. I was undergoing a series of personal crises, and I immediately recognized the medium's welcoming potential.

On 9/11, the Internet was my sole means of communication. My appetite for news jumped a hundredfold, and a deep relationship between survival and the web was forged that day. On Sept. 12, the metropolis nearly shut down, and most people stayed home—the deep shadows of midtown Manhattan's empty canyons bespoke the somberness—but I went to work to take advantage of the faster Internet connection. That day set a pattern for the next several months: I drank up information, reading dozens of websites and foreign news sources.

Blogs featured heavily in this netsurfing binge. The psychedelic tinge of science-fiction fandom and geekiness repelled me. But my standards adjusted to those uncertain days, marked by post-traumatic stress and fear stoked by the anthrax attacks. If I gleaned one nugget of interesting information from a blog, it passed, no matter how otherwise dodgy.

The sun and the moon of the warblogging community in those post-9/11 days were Glenn Reynolds and Andrew Sullivan. I had read Sullivan when he edited *The New Republic* and disliked the former Gap model. But I became a devoted reader of his blog. It was there

that I got my introduction to Reynolds and his site, Instapundit.

Reynolds was cheerful, pithy, breezy yet serious. In the days following 9/11, he was an indefatigable clearinghouse of information, performing, in the words of antiwar blogger Jim Henley, a “public service.” Compared to other sketchy characters populating the blogosphere, Reynolds seemed like Mr. Rock-Solid: a law professor who became famous by accident, married with a kid. He linked, in the early days, to an encouragingly eclectic group of people, Left and Right.

In addition to the sun and the moon were smaller planets and asteroids in the blogiverse: Matt Welch, Ken Layne, Henley, and others. They were all self-made, published writers but had an unassuming “just folks” quality so different from professional writers who, in my experience, were fearsomely moody and savagely competitive. We warbloggers sported the “Casablanca” attitude: we were in this together and petty differences “didn’t amount to a hill of beans in this crazy world.”

And the world had indeed turned upside down. Before 9/11, I used to amuse myself by performing back-of-the-envelope calculations of how much money I would retire with. Now the future seemed dark, murky, menacing.

After months of obsessive reading, I launched my own blog, marketing it with an aggression and flair that I had never mustered in my real life. Reynolds, Layne, Welch, and Henley astonished me

by responding to my emails and by linking to my blog. Getting attention from people who were noticed by Big Media but who refused to respect it back mollified something inside me—the conflicted woman who pretended to be anti-authoritarian but craved attention and approval from credentialing authorities. In those early days of warblogging, Reynolds fondly called the female warblogging contingent “the Brigade of Bellicose Women.” But my bellicosity was not only towards al-Qaeda. They had merely gotten in the way.

My blog was a C-lister, which is blog-speak for low-traffic. Very few people read my musings, but I was well-placed among more prestigious blogger buddies who linked to me, and I became ensconced firmly in the warblogosphere. Every mention of my blog was a cheap thrill that lifted me for days.

Nevertheless, I chafed at the groupthink of blogging and dared to test the limits of nonconformity. In August 2002, I referred to bloggers as a “herd of co-dependent minds” paraphrasing Harold Rosenberg. (Not that anyone in the blogosphere knew who he was or cared.) I criticized Sullivan for his slavish devotion to Bush. More disturbing, Instapundit, who in the days following 9/11 I consulted as obsessively as a Tourette's victim blinked, had begun to strike me as a strange, upside-down world of inverted values. A post linking to sex-writer Heather Havrilesky could follow one about dad-duties with the “Insta-



Child.” I began to wonder whether I was losing perspective. I would drop out of blogging for weeks, but I could not break my obsession. The day was divided into blogging and gathering material for blogging.

When I spoke with friends about politics, I withdrew from their reasonable words, adopting the superior air of the cult member who had special knowledge. Doubts nagged, but then I would return to the comforting refuge: I was a warblogger, and being a warblogger meant that you sacrificed some individual morality for the sake of having allies in a necessary war.

On Sept. 24, 2002, Instapundit posted: “A BLOG FROM BAGHDAD, via Eve Tushnet. Wonder if he’s one of the two people in Iraq who have bought Mobius Dick CDs via the Web? He looks the type. Er, and that’s a compliment, of course.”

I clicked on the link and encountered the strangest blog I’d ever seen. Iraqi bloggers are a dime a dozen now, but in September 2002, reading a blog from Iraq was like encountering an extraterrestrial.

I have been asked many times how I immediately knew that Salam’s blog was real. Because it was too authentically strange to be a hoax. During the war, some journalists conjectured that Salam was a Mossad fabrication, but I had lived in Israel, and I felt that the Mossad was the least likely suspect. They could never have created this character who seemed like something out of a Buñuel movie, if Buñuel had been an Arab. For example, Salam’s original blog, *Where is Raed?*, sported an obscene comment about Heba, a former fiancée of the eponymous Raed, who was in the United States and engaged to be married to another girl, Raed’s occupation apparently being that of serial fiancé. I was quaintly aghast at his impudence. Would the

Mossad have made this up? No, they would have put some trite Arab nationalist politics into his mouth.

Despite my ostensible horror, I borrowed a graphic from his site, not realizing that I was stealing his bandwidth. A few days later, I received an email from Salam apologizing for the fact that the graphic I had stolen from him went offline because of the traffic on my blog.

“Are you real? Where are you blogging from? Are you really Iraqi? Are you in Baghdad?” I asked.

“Yes I am blogging from Baghdad,” he wrote. “I guess if certain people see this blog I would be in trouble. I’d be pasta sauce actually. But the whole internet thing is so new here they don’t really know how to control this, the firewall they are using is really amateurish in its settings. So I am taking advantage of that until they wise up. salam.”

IT WAS A RELIEF TO MAKE **HONEST HUMAN CONTACT**—JOKES, NONSENSE, CRAZY BANTER. SALAM BECAME MY MISCHIEVOUS COUSIN. **DURING A WAR.**

Salam’s emails continued to appear every so often like apparitions. We’d exchange a flurry of communications, and he would disappear for weeks.

As the war drums beat louder, the political blogging world began to bifurcate along conventional lines, the Right being pro-war, and the Left against. Being the special friend of an Arab blogger, in fact, the only Arab blogger at the time, and one from Iraq, afforded me a privileged place.

And there was this: I loved Salam and love him still. I was emphatically not raised to demonize Arabs, but all my life Arabs were, to use the kind of academic phrase I usually choke on, “The Other.” It was a relief to make honest human contact—jokes, nonsense, crazy banter. Salam became my mischievous cousin. During a war.

I resolved my ambivalence about the invasion with a time-honored method—denial. I convinced myself that Bush was engaging in a huge saber-rattling act to pressure Saddam and had no real intentions of invading. At the last moment, when it was obvious that war was upon us, I switched to supporting the war, insulting antiwar libertarian blogger Jim Henley as “morally squalid” for going to an antiwar demonstration organized by International A.N.S.W.E.R.

In March 2003, my blog’s daily traffic shot up to the mid-20,000s, and suddenly my mailbox was full of letters from people and journalists all around the world asking me about Salam. Around this time, speculation that Salam was fake reached a fever pitch, and I published a humorous “bloggadavit” attesting to his genuineness. A reporter from *The New Yorker* contacted me, and I

agreed to be interviewed for an article that I thought was going to be about how the blogging community had collectively scooped the MSM (blog-talk for mainstream media) on Salam—and to prove that Salam was real. The piece, which came out right after the initial invasion, during which time Salam was cut off from the outside world, concentrated every bit of personal information that he had placed on his blog. It looked as if I had given Anne Frank’s address to the Gestapo. After the war started, and Salam was out of contact, I resolved not to speak to any of the journalists besieging me for information about him.

I maintained this silence until April 9, when looters overtook Baghdad and I feared that Salam would be killed. Among the cheap solicitations in my mailbox was one that stood out in its

courtesy, concision, and lucidity. I contacted the reporter. We combed Salam's blog and emails for personal information, deduced who he was, and contacted his employer, who was based in Beirut. We did not know whether he was alive or dead until May 7, when he sent word from an Internet café in Baghdad, which I posted on his blog.

Two memories stand out from the summer of 2003: going on a July 4 hiking trip and being told by another hiker, "This war was pure aggression," and later that summer, by an Israeli expat, "Looks like real chaos in Iraq." What? An Israeli saying that? Didn't he know that, according to Instapundit, MSM was lying about the chaos? The same untrustworthy MSM that routinely defamed and trashed Israel?

Flitting and borrowing do not encourage thought. Real writing is painstaking and demanding, which is why good writing takes so much from the few who have done it well. Truman Capote once said to Norman Mailer about the Beats: "That's not writing, that's typing."

I can remember looking up links until well into the wee hours to create one post. I don't know which one—they all meld together into one puddle, as if the content were unimportant but the emotional impetus was the thing. That is what a blog is: an attitude, a posture, not a considered piece of writing that contributes something to the sum total of human knowledge. If you strike the right pose, a big blogger will link to you, and you will be noticed. Wrong pose, obscurity.

But I scarcely had the worst of it. Salam, who now reports for the BBC, wrote to me: "Yes, Saddam was a monster but how this is better than his monstrosity I can't tell. The so-called Iraqi politicians who came into Baghdad riding U.S. tanks are vultures. They watch us die while they squabble over seats. And the coalition forces' sole interest at the moment is to minimize its losses.

"Services? Just as bad. We didn't have gas shortages three years ago. Baghdad municipality has no control over the city at all. Baghdad looks horrible. Dirty and full of big concrete walls. And at least electricity was on some sort of schedule ... not the total chaos that it is now.

"And talking of chaos, Iraq is absolutely lawless. University professors get killed because students don't like their grades and doctors are kidnapped for money. The iron fist that was Saddam's at least meant that I don't have to worry about random kidnappings, killings and rapes."

This is the new world warblogging boosted—and now even that virtual universe is caving in. Blogging, a creation of left-wing technogeeks, has returned to its roots. Chris Bowers, a writer with the left-blog collective "My DD," recently wrote, "the right-wing blogosphere itself has been all but annihilated. Most major right-wing bloggers have now been incorporated into the established news media apparatus." Andrew Sullivan writes a blog for *Time*. Matt Welch, who made his living from the pen all along, is assistant opinion editor of the *Los Angeles Times*. Matthew Yglesias, Harvard-educated and possessed of a ferociously lubricated tongue, would have made it as a writer, blogs or no blogs. Oliver Willis, a bright young African-American, who now writes for Media Matters, may be the one "pure blogger" discovery, and he too was destined for success.

## THAT IS **WHAT A BLOG IS: AN ATTITUDE, A POSTURE, NOT A CONSIDERED PIECE OF WRITING** THAT CONTRIBUTES TO THE **SUM TOTAL OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE.**

As my thinking about the war shifted, my posts grew fitful. I stopped blogging, but I couldn't stay away. When I returned, I no longer belonged to that elite company I had previously enjoyed: all my warblogger friends had broken their links to me.

And that was the least of the damage. I don't know if there are any reputable studies on netsurfing's effect on the brain, but I am positive that some people should limit netsurfing strictly. Hours on the net encouraged a deadly combination of laxness, recklessness, and crankiness in me. Open 5 to 10 windows, take something from each, flitting back and forth, and you've got yourself a post. Insta-writer? No, insta-junk. Reading some of my archives is a painful experience. I made one foolish prediction after another, pontificating on subjects about which I had no specialized knowledge. That's what bloggers do.

While powerful men made decisions that I convinced myself my warblog somehow affected, my little life began to crumble. On Jan. 3, 2004, I was fired from my job for, among other things, blogging at work. While I only read *The New Yorker* twice yearly at the dentist's office, my bosses read it every week and figured out my identity pretty quickly. At the same time, I had become obsessed with every fluctuation in the market and my 401k—which I had, in the years before I ever netsurfed, carefully built up with some excellent investments—frittered away in a variety of foolish schemes, tailor-made for greedy, desperate suckers. Information is nothing to the market, which processes millions of bits every day through its gigantic system. But it's a killer to the individual investor, especially one living in a virtual world, which encourages illusions of omnipotence.

The only blogging business model that has shown profits is Nick Denton's mini-empire, which grafts two sure-fire old favorites—porn and celebrity gossip—to politics. And not surprisingly, Denton has said the most sensible words about blogging: it is “just another talent pool.” Nothing to sneeze at, but not a revolutionary change in the power structure. An individual blogger can be an unbeatable on-the-spot independent reporter, provided there is Internet access and a computer handy. How else would the world have met Salam, literally one in 25 million, whose only chance for self-expression was to cast a virtual message in a bottle? Bloggers from literate but repressive societies, such as Egypt, which has some excellent bloggers, can now keep from exploding, while helping outsiders see an otherwise impenetrable society. And occasionally, blogging can pluck a quirky, otherwise uncategorizable writer from obscurity.

These are all good things. But it is delusional to think that a lone blogger can right the wrongs of the world with a Zola-like pen or that individuals of goodwill from contending societies can circumvent the politics of cold, hard interest, as I had fantasized.

Glenn Reynolds's new book, *An Army of Davids*, is not about blogging but is a manifesto of “transhumanism,” a form of nanotechnology he believes will bring eternal life for humans, after a radical compounding in the sum total of human knowledge called “The Singularity” kicks in. Canny as ever, he now distances himself from grandiose claims about bloggers and blogging: “People oversell the power of blogs and alternative media,” he told *USA Today*.

As for me, I no longer read Instapundit. I have a new job—and no time to blog. ■

*Diana Moon writes from New York.*

# Fighting the Last War

Rumsfeld's resignation is less important than a reordering of U.S. strategy.

By William S. Lind

SHOULD SECRETARY of Defense Donald Rumsfeld resign? Of course he should. The Bush administration prides itself on running like a business. What happens in business to a COO who leads his company into a risky venture that fails, imperiling the company's future? He is encouraged to seek employment elsewhere and resigns to spend more time with his family.

The generals who have urged Rumsfeld to resign are right. But the questions begin rather than end at that point. Who replaces him? Undoubtedly, someone who represents the same approach. While Secretary Rumsfeld was an enthusiastic proponent of “getting Saddam,” he was only one of many in the current administration and not the most senior. It is clear that President George W. Bush himself wanted a war with Iraq, as did Vice President Cheney. Had Rumsfeld opposed them, his resignation would have been requested long ago, and we might have Secretary of Defense Wolfowitz now occupying the hot seat instead of relaxing at the World Bank spa.

Nor is Secretary Rumsfeld representing those above him only with regard to the war in Iraq. It is an open secret that the secretary is not much interested in that war. His focus is “Transformation,” a broad effort to replace manpower with high technology that will guarantee American military dominance far into the future, over all potential state opponents. Transformation was foreshadowed in at least one major campaign

speech by George W. Bush in 2000, and I suspect it is the vice president's view as well.

When Dick Cheney was a congressman, he was a member of the Congressional Military Reform Caucus, which represented the diametrical opposite to Transformation and its vision of hi-tech video-game war. But several years into the administration's first term, I had lunch with Vice President Cheney in his office and gave him an updated version of military reform in a lengthy and detailed paper prepared by an informal group of serving officers, mostly Marines. He promised to read it, but I received no reply.

It seems safe to say that if Rumsfeld goes, the policies he represents will not go with him. In his place, we will get Rumsfeld Lite or Rumsfeld Nice, which may smooth generals' tailfeathers but will not put the Pentagon or the country on a better course.

Some of the retired generals who have called for Rumsfeld's resignation, men such as Marine Lt. Gen. Greg Newbold, understand the follies of Transformation as well the strategic error represented by the war in Iraq. But when Rumsfeld's defenders argue that many of his general officer critics are dinosaurs who resent any challenge to business as usual, they have a point. Most generals and admirals are not soldiers and sailors but milicrats—bureaucrats in uniform for whom the real world is not the battlefield but the internal world of service and budget politics. The March 10, 2006 draft of the

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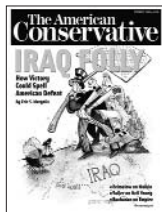
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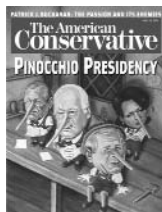


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U.S. Army's Campaign Plan states, "The Army's center of gravity is the resource process." That is true for the other services as well, at least at the general officer level.

It is commonly said that militaries always prepare for the last war. In reality, they usually prepare for wars long before the last one. In the 1970s, the great historian of the Soviet Army in World War II, Professor John Erikson, said to me, "Do you want to understand the Soviet Army today? Ask yourself what the Russian Army was like under Nicholas I."

Had today's U.S. Army prepared for the last war, the war in Vietnam, we would probably be in better shape in Iraq today. It prepared instead, as it has for almost a century, for World War I on the Western Front, a war dominated by firepower and attrition. It learned that way of war, Second Generation war, from the French army during and after World War I, and despite the outcome of the German campaign against France in 1940, it has never been able to unlearn its French lessons.

Lessons of wars past become entrenched in a military's culture and survive there long after their source is forgotten. They do so because one of the characteristics of almost all state militaries is their extraordinary stability over time.

In late March, I spoke on the question, "What determines how the military prepares for the next war?" at a conference titled "Imagining the Next War," put on by the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation in New York City. There, I tried to identify the factors that give military services their almost unshakeable internal stability. Some are fairly obvious. Not unreasonably, militaries fear that innovations will result in failure on the battlefield. Most military services are not only bureaucratically structured, they permit little or no lateral entry. The

business world offers parallels, usually in the form of industries that failed because the world changed faster than they could. Armies and Marine Corps draw men who love athletics and grew up playing sports; athletes learn early in life to internalize rules, not question them. Someone said that it may have been true that the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton, but that the early battles and campaigns of every subsequent British war were also lost there.

Other factors for stability within militaries are less obvious. Perhaps the most important is the heritage of First Generation war. The First Generation of modern war ran roughly from the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 to the time of the American Civil War. Its battlefields demanded order in the form of rigid line and column tactics. Not surprisingly, the battlefield of order created a military culture of order, embodied in and reinforced by uniforms, careful gradations of rank, elaborate military courtesies and, of course, endless drill.

This culture of order and its manifestations came to define the difference between military and civilian, and it drew and still draws people who seek such order into military services. To depart from it would be, in the minds of most soldiers and sailors (naval warfare evolved differently but developed a similar culture), to abandon the very things that make them military. This cultural generator of inward focus is so powerful that it has been the main stumbling block for state militaries all over the world for about 150 years.

It was also around the time of the American Civil War that the order of the battlefield began to break down. Since then, state militaries have been caught in a widening contradiction between their internal culture of order and the increasing disorderliness of the battlefield.



They have responded in two basic ways. Second Generation war, which as noted was developed by the French army during and after World War I, maintained the culture of order by reducing war to putting centrally controlled firepower on targets. The internal culture of Second Generation armed forces, including America's today, remains focused inward on rules, processes, and methods; maintains rigid hierarchies that feed centralized decision-making; prizes obedience over initiative; and depends on imposed discipline.

Third Generation war, also known as maneuver warfare, was developed by the German army, largely during World War I but with roots leading back to the Scharnhorst reforms in the Prussian army that followed Prussia's defeat by Napoleon in 1806. Not only did the radical new German tactics of 1917-1918 break with linearity—the "Blitzkrieg" of World War II was based on these World War I "stormtroop tactics" but gained operational mobility by replacing the storm infantry divisions with Panzer divisions—they both reflected and helped create a very different military culture. The German army focused outward on the enemy, the situation, and the result the situation demanded; leaders at all levels were expected to get the necessary result regardless of rules or even orders. Decision-making was decentralized; initiative was prized over obedience; and the German army depended much more on self-discipline because imposed discipline was incompatible with initiative.

The main task facing the American armed services today is to move from the Second to the Third Generation. This was the goal of the Military Reform Movement, and in the early 1990s the U.S. Marine Corps adopted Third Generation maneuver warfare as its formal doctrine (at least on paper; what it actu-

ally does remains mostly Second Generation).

It is in this context that we can most clearly see the error of Rumsfeld's Transformation. Far from moving the American military into the Third Generation, it reinforces the Second with the false promise of winning through technology. War is still a matter of putting firepower on targets, but now "precision weapons" will make that sufficient. Centralization is reinforced by other technologies, including computer systems that will in theory let generals in remote headquarters control the movements of every soldier. (Attempts to do just that were a major reason for the failure of Operation Anaconda in Afghanistan and bin Laden's successful escape.) Obedience is demanded and initiative is shunned because initiative can easily disrupt "synchronization." Imposed discipline, rigid hierarchies, and stovepiped information flows all feed the centralized control of hi-tech fires that are the basis of Transformation. Far from representing progress, Transformation reinforces the culture of order that is the ball and chain that state militaries drag behind them.

Worse still, as Transformation pulls the American military backward, war is moving on into a Fourth Generation. In the Fourth Generation, the state loses the monopoly on war it established with the Peace of Westphalia. All over the world, state militaries find themselves fighting non-state opponents. Almost everywhere, the state is losing. Second Generation armed forces, to whom war is putting firepower on targets, are helpless against opponents who, lacking any distinction from surrounding civilian populations, are very good at making themselves untargetable. While Fourth Generation war is much too new (or too old) to know how state militaries can fight it successfully, it is clear that Fourth Generation forces

themselves are outward focused, decentralized, prize initiative, and rely on self-discipline. Their state opponents will need a similar institutional culture, which is to say a Third Generation culture, to have any chance against them. Fourth Generation versus Second Generation are ships passing in the night, to the great advantage of the Fourth Generation.

It is in this light that the question of Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld's potential resignation should be seen, and what quickly comes to mind is Lenin's warning, "Don't worry about the idiot Romanov." Rumsfeld's replacement by another advocate of Transformation means nothing. His replacement by someone who would defer to our generals and admirals, wedded as most are to Second Generation war, also means nothing. The chances of obtaining a new secretary who would seek to move the U.S. armed forces beyond the Second Generation into the Third, facing the Fourth as quickly as possible, are so remote under this or any prospective replacement administration that if it happens, I will expect to see the Archangel Michael hovering over the Pentagon.

Instead, we will continue to lie becalmed between a dinosaur-inhabited Scylla and a techno-fantasy Charybdis called Transformation, as we lose two Fourth Generation wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Perhaps those defeats will do for us what Jena did for Prussia and propel us toward genuine military reform. More likely is another historical parallel, 17th-century Spain: nothing will change and we will just accustom ourselves to losing.

After the 20th century, no historian can be an optimist. ■

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*William S. Lind is director of the Center for Cultural Conservatism at the Free Congress Foundation in Washington, D.C.*

# Arts & Letters

## FILM

[*The Da Vinci Code*]

### The Church of Dan Brown

By Steve Sailer

BACK WHEN I WROTE computer users' manuals, I'd try to break up the forbidding slabs of my pedantic prose by employing an EZ-2-Read Question & Answer format. Watching the similarly structured "Da Vinci Code," I couldn't help musing about how my tome, *HP LaserJet Code*, would have turned out as a \$125 million summer blockbuster:

Audrey Tautou (*beseechingly*):

How do I print in Times Roman?

Tom Hanks (*decisively*):

Insert the serif font cartridge.

Audrey (*frantically*):

But the printer's not doing anything!

Tom (*with steely resolve*):

Try plugging it in.

I'm confident the stars would have delivered my lines with more believability, charisma, and sexual tension than they mustered for screenwriter Akiva Goldsman's didactic dialogue.

Dan Brown's 2003 novel about a Harvard professor of religious symbology (huh?) who unravels Rome's 2,000-year-long conspiracy to cover up how Jesus wed Mary Magdalene but then St. Peter stole Church leadership from the Widow of Christ, is a knock-off of Umberto Eco's satire *Foucault's Pendulum* for the terminally literal-minded, whose number is legion, evidently: the book sold 60 million copies in 44 languages.

The Ron Howard-directed film is a monotonous thriller, doomed by its manifest bogusness. Yet daft esoterica doesn't have to ruin a movie. Both the Rudyard Kipling-John Huston classic "The Man Who Would Be King" and the amiable family film "National Treasure," for example, concern lost treasures of the Freemasons. But good movies don't take their pseudo-lore so seriously. "The Da Vinci Code's" unhinged loathing of Catholicism obliterates its sense of fun.

As Tom Wolfe pointed out in *The Bonfire of the Vanities*, and the Duke lacrosse team brouhaha has confirmed, there is a tremendous hunger these days for a Great White Defendant to hate. Paul Bettany, who in February's "Firewall" played one of Hollywood's standard-issue villains, a blond BBC-accented bank robber, ups the ante here by portraying the Great Albino Defendant, a blue-eyed, Latin-speaking albino monk, a sort of holy hit man dispatched by the conservative Opus Dei prelature to rub out Hanks and Tautou.

There's potential for self-mockery in lines like "I have to get to a library—*fast!*" Unfortunately, the film doesn't even try to earn your willing suspension of disbelief by being entertaining.

It's too busy bludgeoning you into accepting the neo-Gnostic balderdash that Brown lifted from the 1982 book *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*, which, in turn, was based on a 1960s hoax by conman Pierre Plantard. He claimed to be King of France by right of descent from the Dark Ages' Merovingian Dynasty, who were, he asserted, the offspring of Jesus and Mary Magdalene. According to forged parchments that Plantard planted in the Bibliothèque Nationale, the Priory of Sion, a cabal of great men like Leonardo Da Vinci and Isaac Newton, has secretly fought the evil Vatican for 900 years to protect the sacred Magdalenian-Merovingian lineage.

In the not-so-shocking climax to "The Da Vinci Code," we discover that one of the characters is Jesus' last living descendent.

This "Holy Blood" hooey is superstition of the grossest sort. Consider how genealogy actually works. Go back 80 generations (2,000 years), and your family tree has one septillion slots to fill. If Jesus had any living descendents today, He would have millions of them. The only way there could be just one surviving heir is if the family had relentlessly inbred so incestuously that the latest Merovingian would have three eyes.

Brown's contribution was to appeal to women, the main audience today for novels, by concocting a New Age feminist slant: the Roman Emperor Constantine wrote Mrs. Christ out of the New Testament to subordinate women below the liberated state they'd enjoyed under "the pagans," who worshipped "the Goddess." (Which pagans? Which goddess?) Fortunately, Leonardo and Newton struggled to preserve "pagan reverence for the sacred feminine." (Uh, weren't they a couple of nature's bachelors?)

Although G.K. Chesterton apparently never quite said the most famous line attributed to him—"When a man stops believing in God, he doesn't then believe in nothing, he believes anything"—it sure applies to the millions of "Da Vinci Code" fans. Evelyn Waugh noted, "Western Christianity, alone of all the religions of the world, exposes its mysteries to every observer," which makes it too egalitarian for modern Gnostics who want the inside skinny instead, even if they have to sit through the 149 endless minutes of "The Da Vinci Code" to hear it. ■

Rated PG-13 for disturbing images, violence, some nudity, thematic material, brief drug references, and sexual content.

## BOOKS

[*Revolutionary Characters: What Made the Founders Different*, Gordon S. Wood, Penguin, 319 pages]

# Founding Principals

By Daniel McCarthy

AFTER 230 YEARS, the American Revolution and our Founding Fathers have become shopworn things, leached of much of their character and reduced to mannequins to be dressed up in the intellectual fashions of the day. Idealized portrayals of Washington, Jefferson, Adams, and the rest still find a popular audience, resisting revisionist pressure. But as objects of reverence, the Founders cease to be what they were—revolutionaries, men who took up arms against their government and spilled blood for their rights.

If alabaster Founders survive at the popular level, clichés of a different sort prevail in academia, where perpetual debunking is the fate suffered by these men—and that they were men is part of the problem. But only part: Washington was rich as well as white and male. And he owned slaves. So did Jefferson, who slept with one, too. Because of the gulf between his life and his ideals—“all men are created equal”—Jefferson has become a particular target of censure. But the others get their share too.

Not that all scholarly treatments of the Founders fall into that mode. Just as pervasive, and just as off base, are those scholars who find in the *Federalist* and other papers of the founding generation far-sighted statesmen who anticipated the modern world of competing interest groups and lobbyists scrambling over one another like beetles after the main chance. Political parties and pork-barrel politics are what America has always

been about, in this view, right back to the Constitutional Convention.

Gordon S. Wood, the Alva O. Way University Professor at Brown, navigated past all these shoals of stereotype in *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, the work that won him a Pulitzer Prize a little over a decade ago. He does so again in *Revolutionary Characters*, which restores something of their 18th-century significance to the eight revolutionaries treated within these pages. But cleaning away the layers of whitewash and graffiti that have accumulated on these men is only part of Wood's project. He also has a more specific objective in mind: to show why a nation aborning that produced a half-dozen statesmen of world-historical caliber—and perhaps a score more of nearly that rank—seemingly cannot produce a single one today.

“What made subsequent duplication of the remarkable intellectual and political leadership of the revolutionaries impossible in America,” Wood contends, “was the growth of what we have come to value most, our egalitarian culture and our democratic society.” The Enlightenment's gentlemanly ideal demanded statesmen like Washington, Adams, and Jefferson. But the commercial and increasingly egalitarian and democratic Republic they created had little use for—and considerable suspicion toward—men of such character. Those Founders who lived long enough to taste the fruits of their labor, Jefferson especially, found them unexpectedly bitter.

Disinterestedness was the hallmark of a gentleman's character. He was not the creature of financial interests—if he was not independently wealthy, he at least affected the attitude of one who was, spending generously and borrowing as needed to show that money had no hold over him. He was impartial, concerned only for the public good, not the advancement of friends or, still less, of party. Cultivating this kind of character was of overriding importance to the men Wood profiles (except, notably, Aaron Burr) so much so that even personal shame was preferable to a tarnished political reputation. When

Alexander Hamilton was accused of corruption for making payments to a man named James Reynolds, rather than let it be thought that he was engaged in any political intrigue, Hamilton revealed that he had, in fact, been conducting an affair with Reynolds's wife—the money was for blackmail. The personal humiliation involved, for Hamilton's wife as well as Hamilton, was secondary to the risk to his public character.

Money, much more than sex, was the root of all republican evils. There was more to this belief than just aristocratic contempt for commerce. Bribery was a mainstay of political power in 18th-century Britain; it was the means by which the king subverted the independence of Parliament and thereby the liberties of Englishmen. Not for nothing did Samuel Johnson define “pension” in his great dictionary as, in part, “pay given to a state hireling for treason to his country.” The young Republic had as much to fear from foreign wealth as well as foreign armies, and the possibility of one branch of government corrupting another was very real.

The Founders feared as well the mixture of industrial interests with state power, a combination likely to create constituencies for monopoly at home and wars abroad. Monopoly, in the 18th century, was not understood as a result of free competition but as a state grant of exclusive privilege to favored manufacturers. Indeed, “Social honors, social distinctions, perquisites of office, business contracts, privileges and monopolies, even excessive property and wealth of various sorts,” Wood wrote in *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, “...seemed to flow from connections to government, in the end from connections to monarchical authority.”

Only disinterested men could administer government justly. Any other kind would lead to tyranny, either by betraying the Republic to foreign interests or by using the power of government to enrich themselves and their friends at the expense of others. That, at least, was the theory—though Hamilton, for one, had other ideas.

Wood's first chapter makes the case for George Washington as the model of disinterestedness. Other scholars have found in Washington's career hypocrisy and an unseemly preoccupation with what we would call public image. How many times did he retire from public life only to return to military or political command yet again? He did it after the Revolutionary War. He did it again after serving as president of the Constitutional Convention. Even after his two terms as president of the United States, he returned to the fray when called upon by President Adams to take charge of the Army. His hand-wringing over how the public might see him in each of these episodes, and in the matter of whether he should accept shares in the Potomac Company, makes ready fodder for debunking scholars.

But Wood argues, persuasively, that Washington wasn't just putting up a pretense to republican humility. He cared about how he was perceived because, in the highly personal politics of the 18th century, appearances mattered. And in surrendering his sword to Congress

after the successful conclusion of the Revolutionary War and stepping down as president after eight years, Washington did indeed do something extraordinary. Jefferson, among others, expected him to serve as president for life. He could have reigned as an elected monarch. And earlier he could have overawed the Continental Congress. For a man of his stature to surrender power voluntarily was unheard of in the modern world—the Roman Cincinnatus offered the only obvious parallel. Washington's example set the young Republic apart from the old rules of European power politics, or so it seemed.

Washington served the needs of both emerging poles of American political consciousness. He embodied the Enlightenment ideal of disinterestedness so dear to Jefferson. And he lent his prestige, which grew with each act of humility, to the national government at every stage, from the Constitutional Convention through the struggle for ratification to his tenure as president. That pleased Hamilton, who as secretary of the Treasury—and a surrogate son of sorts to the childless president—was able to shape Washington's administration in ways that Jefferson despised.

Poor Jefferson. Wood cites his early biographer James Parton's remark that "If America is right, Jefferson was right." But as Wood observes, "Over the past four decades or so many people, including some historians, have concluded that something is seriously wrong with America. And if something is wrong with America, something has to be wrong with Jefferson." Slavery and Sally Hemings are just the beginning: "The Jefferson that emerges out of much recent scholarship ... resembles the America many critics have visualized in the past four decades: self-righteous, guilt-ridden, racist, doctrinaire, and filled with liberal pieties that under stress are easily sacrificed."

Attempts to reclaim Jefferson in the '70s and '80s tried to transform him into things he was not: a communitarian, a classical republican. The Sage of Monticello drew from the wisdom of antiquity,

of course, and by the end of his life was a devoted localist. But, as Wood argues, he was always, above all, a democrat, a man of Enlightenment, and a libertarian. He stood for a modern, not classical, kind of virtue, "less the harsh self-sacrifice of antiquity and more the willingness to get along with others for the sake of peace and prosperity. Virtue became identified with politeness, good taste, and one's instinctive sense of morality."

Jefferson's faith in the natural sociability of man was the root of his faith in democracy; he saw little need for minorities to fear majority power. But state power was another matter: "He hated all bureaucracy and all coercive instruments of government; he sometimes gave the impression that government was only a device by which the few attempted to rob, cheat, and oppress the many." The government that governed least was best because fundamentally decent people did not need anything more.

He held to this vision even in the hardest cases, those of slavery and war. The former he expected to wither away with the progress of the human spirit. And the latter would disappear once republics, loving only peace and commerce, had spread throughout the world. Embargoes, like the disastrous one of Jefferson's second administration, would substitute for war. Toward the end of his life, however, Jefferson's faith, though not forsaken, had grown darker: religious fervor meant intolerance to him, and the growth of Christianity alarmed him. And democracy itself, instead of leading an Enlightened public to elect disinterested statesmen, had produced venal politicians and Andrew Jackson. He blamed all this on the Federalists.

Hamilton did, of course, have in mind an America very different from that of Jefferson's dreams. He wanted glory for himself and his nation. He could obtain the former by turning the latter into a world power on par with Britain. He didn't believe in any natural human sociability that would bring nations together in peaceful foreign trade, and

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domestically he sought to marshal man's venality to the national government's advantage by employing the practices that Jefferson considered corruption. He was, as Wood says, a "big government man," an admirer of George III's "fiscal military state": "Hamilton saw that the secret of the Hanoverian monarchy's success was its system of centralized tax collection and its funded national debt together with its banking structure and its market in public securities. For a state to wage war successfully, it had to tax efficiently and borrow cheaply."

## HE TOOK THE GENTLEMAN'S CODE OF HONOR SERIOUSLY ENOUGH THAT IT FINALLY GOT HIM KILLED WHEN HE ACCEPTED AARON BURR'S CHALLENGE TO A DUEL.

Hamilton would be at home, Wood writes, with "our government's vast federal bureaucracy, its sprawling Pentagon, its enormous CIA, its huge public debt, its taxes beyond any he could have hoped for, and especially its large professional military force with over a million men and women under arms spread across two oceans and dozens of countries." But for all that, he was still an 18th-century gentleman: he understood state finance perhaps better than anyone who had ever lived, but he never enriched himself. And he took the gentleman's code of honor seriously enough that it finally got him killed when he accepted Aaron Burr's challenge to a duel.

Burr, subject of another chapter, had none of the scruples of Hamilton or the other Founders about separating public interest from private. Wood contends that it was this, and not his adventures in the West, that was Burr's real treason: not betrayal of his nation but of his class. When Burr received the same number of electoral votes as Jefferson in presidential contest of 1800 and the race went to the House of Representatives, Hamilton worked to ensure his arch-enemy's election, so appalled was he at the prospect of Burr becoming president. He was ahead of his time, Wood suggests: "Burr may have represented what most American politicians would even-

tually become—pragmatic, get-along men—but to Hamilton and Jefferson he violated everything they had thought the American Revolution had been about."

Some of Wood's chapters—most of which started as essays in *The New Republic* and *The New York Review of Books*—are stronger than others. Wood is never less than engaging as a writer, never less than illuminating as a thinker. But his chapters on Paine, Franklin, and John Adams seem relatively slight. In Paine, he discovers America's first public intellectual, alienated from the

foundling statesmen by, among other things, his direct appeal to an ungentelemanly public and alienated from that very public by his unorthodox religious views. Franklin, subject of Wood's 2004 book *The Americanization of Benjamin Franklin*, is a man of many masks whose frustrated ambitions at the hands of George III's ministers led him to join the Revolution. And Adams, most brilliant of the Founders, was nonetheless a man out of tune with his times, who in Wood's telling could not understand that the Constitution expressed not distinct classes of few and many but the sovereignty of the people as a whole.

None of those chapters breaks new ground. The one devoted to James Madison, however, does. For other scholars there is a James Madison problem—how did the "Father of the Constitution," and author of the Virginia Plan that would have given Congress a veto over state laws, become by 1798 a proponent of states' rights? Wood provides an elegant answer: Madison was a nationalist of a very different sort than Hamilton and the Federalists. He saw the Constitution not as a stepping stone toward creating the British Empire anew but as a check on the illiberal tendencies of state legislatures. Madison hoped the Congress would be a kind of "super-

judge" and that the national government would attract better gentlemen than state legislatures could. Once he saw what Hamilton had in mind, however, he fought to preserve states' prerogatives.

Wood offers a compelling reading of *Federalist* No. 10 to buttress his case. He keeps Madison in his 18th-century context and examines that famous document not in light of what America subsequently grew into—with its political parties and interest groups—but in light of 18th-century British government, where the Crown and Privy Council played the kind of super-political role Wood sees Madison advocating for the federal government. It's an enlightening approach.

Most boldly of all, though, Wood reconsiders what most scholars have considered Madison's greatest failure: his seemingly inept leadership in the War of 1812. In fact, Wood argues, Madison knew exactly what he was doing. He and the Jeffersonians did not prepare for the war before it was upon them because "War, the Republicans realized, would lead to a Hamiltonian monarchical type of government, with increased taxes, an overblown bureaucracy, heavy debts, standing armies, and enhanced executive power." Even once fighting commenced, "Better to allow the country to be invaded and the capital to be burned than to build up state power in a European monarchical manner."

Today such a thing is almost unimaginable. But at the time, as Wood shows, Madison's concern for keeping militarism in check, even in wartime, and his respect for civil liberties *in extremis* won him honor among his countrymen. John Adams said he had "acquired more glory, and established more Union, than all his three Predecessors, Washington, Adams, Jefferson, put together."

"Maybe we ought to spend less time investigating Madison the author of the tenth *Federalist* and more time investigating Madison the president," Wood writes. "His conception of war and government, whether we agree with it or not, might help us understand better the world we have lost." The same can be said of Professor Wood's book. ■

## MUSIC

## Papa Haydn

By Ralph de Toledano

THE MEDIA in all its forms was crowded with highly laudatory comment on the 250th anniversary of the birth of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, hailing him as the greatest composer of his time, if not of all time—a self-taught genius who was performing and composing at age five. This *wunderkind* status is the basis for much of the justified adulation that surrounds him—and little credit is given to this father, Leopold, who was the greatest press agent in musical history.

This is not to downsize Mozart, though one wonders whether there was some out-of-time extrasensory link between what has been called “a lively-minded intellectual lightweight” and the music of the spheres. Past the early compositions, there is, in addition, a sameness to his work which Donald Tovey, the great musicologist, detected. “Mozart’s whole musical language is, and remains throughout,” Tovey noted, “the language of comic opera”—*opera buffa*. That “theatricality” was noted by Virgil Thomson and perhaps by Toscanini, who treated most Mozart scores as if they were “Heigh-Ho Silver.”

In opera, Mozart stands foremost, particularly when he is wedded to the librettos of Lorenzo da Ponte. “Don Giovanni”—its lyricism, its brilliance, its dark passages, its perfection—is unmatched as an opera, *buffa* or *seria*, and the same is nearly true of “*Così fan tutte*” and “*Le Nozze di Figaro*.” Who, having been exposed to “*Giovanni*,” ever forgets “*La ci darem la mano*” or “*Dalla sua pace*”? When I was on long marches, the troops and I picked up our sagging spirits and restored our leg muscles with “*Non più andrai*.” In contrast, Mozart’s Masses and liturgical pieces were conditioned by a Freemasonry bereft of religious emotion and written as ordered.

Even his arioso “*Et incarnatus est*”—one of the purest and most beautiful passages in church music—gives the “Great Mass in C Minor” no incandescence.

We are repeatedly told that Mozart was self-taught in composition, hardly accurate when one considers the influence of his father. In his early years, Mozart had no formal academic training, but he did study under Haydn—as did Beethoven—and he would later say, “It was from Haydn that I first learned the true way to compose quartets.” The *ars musica* of what we call “classicism” had all been handed to him by Haydn, who in 1761, when Mozart was five, had composed 30 symphonies and a whole library of scores in other forms.

An old edition of *Groves* tells us “Haydn’s position in the history of music is of the first importance. When we consider the poor position in which he found certain important forms of music, and, on the other hand, the vast fields which he opened to his successors, it is impossible to overstate his creative powers.” Even in his lifetime, Papa Haydn was recognized as the “father of the symphony” and the “father of instrumental music”—and (again *Groves*), “There is scarcely a form throughout the whole range of music in which he did not make his influence felt.”

His *oeuvre* was marked by inexhaustible invention, lucidity, depth, perfect finish, spontaneity. His later symphonies—and not only those he wrote in his triumphal periods in London—completely overshadowed those of his predecessors and contemporaries. Those symphonies, as well as his major work, are each a world unto themselves and not the rubber-stamp output of other famous composers. Virgil Thomson, always slightly cool to Haydn, still characterized his work as “a goldmine of melody and instrumentation ... giving weight to what might be merely graceful.”

With the advent of the LP and the CD, and with the record companies looking for music other than that of the old and worn catalog, Haydn slowly came into his own both in the record catalogues and in symphony halls, though for far

too long as an also-ran to Mozart. In the 1950s, the Haydn Society issued a beautifully performed series of his Masses. “At the thought of God, my heart leaps,” this deeply religious man once said—and so it was with Haydn’s church music, which until then lived for the most part in the unheard scores studied by musicologists.

The six Masses he wrote after the triumphs of his visit to London and the other capitals of Europe are in a sense the key to Haydn’s genius. Certainly no liturgical writer since Tomas Luis de Victoria reached up to God so earnestly and beautifully in the creation of the Mass as Haydn—and none since then has challenged him. (These Masses can be heard in a very fine recording for Phillips by John Eliot Gardner and the Monteverdi Choir.) For the “*Heilgmesse*,” the “*Nelsonmesse*,” the “*Theresienmesse*,” and the others are the measures of his contrapuntal mastery, religious depth, his sense of the dimensions of the Mass, and his deep Catholic faith. They echo the paean of the Sanctus: *pleni sunt coeli et terra Gloria tua*—“Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.”

Admire, if you will in this 250th anniversary of his birth, the boyish and vagrant graces of Mozart, his ebullient genius. Haydn called him the greatest composer of all time, but he virtually had the same praise for Handel. Beethoven had sought Haydn’s advice and instruction and remarked, on seeing a picture of Haydn’s birthplace, “To think that so great a man should have been born in a common peasant’s cottage.” Honored and loved by all Europe, the reigning monarch of its music, he would say quietly of himself, “I know that God has bestowed a talent upon me, and I thank him for it. I think I have done my duty, and been of use in my generation by my works. Let others do the same.” Few celebrated the 250th anniversary of Haydn’s birth, but what will the world of music say in 2032, his 300th birthday? ■

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# Russian Bear Baiting



Failure has done nothing to moderate the insane ambitions of U.S. policymakers. Not content with the bloody fiasco in Iraq, the intensification of the

war in Afghanistan, a soaring budget deficit, and the electoral triumphs of the anti-American populist Left throughout South America, American policymakers have decided to open up a number of new battlefronts. First, they threaten to overthrow the clerical regime in Tehran. As if that weren't enough, they have now decided to pick a fight with Russia. Yes, Russia, the biggest country in the world and one that possesses thousands of nuclear warheads. Hubris like this has not been seen since Adolf Hitler.

A little while ago, Vice President Cheney went to Vilnius, Lithuania—a country that recently was an integral part of the Soviet Union—and accused Russia of undermining “the territorial integrity of a neighbor” and interfering with “democratic movements.” Cheney was belligerent, undiplomatic, and almost looking for trouble. But he was not bellicose enough for the Democratic Party leadership. A few days after Cheney's speech, an open letter was delivered to the White House, signed by Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid, Joe “Your words are my words” Biden, and Carl Levin, the ranking Democratic member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. The open letter urged President Bush to use the power of his office to dissuade Russia from selling the Iranians air defense missile systems. Those are of no threat to the United States, or indeed anyone else—unless Uncle Sam or Israel plans to attack Iran.

Amidst the hysteria over Russia's alleged threats against its neighbors, Washington of course ignores its own threatening moves toward Russia.

Having made promises to Gorbachev at the time of German reunification that NATO would not seek to take advantage of the fall of the Warsaw Pact and expand eastwards, the West, led by Uncle Sam, promptly threw these pledges into the wastebasket. In fact, the United States has surrounded Russia by inducting Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Romania, Bulgaria, and Hungary into NATO. Washington is also actively urging NATO membership for Ukraine, Georgia, and Azerbaijan. We are building military bases on Russia's borders and even threatening to station our ballistic missile defense system in former Warsaw Pact territory. When the Russians, in response to the increasingly belligerent anti-Russian leadership in Ukraine, said that in the future they would ask the Ukrainians to pay market prices for its gas imports, Western leaders shrieked as if Stalin were sending the Red Army into Finland.

What is going on here? Who in hell is this gang that can't shoot straight to tell others how to conduct themselves? Even a state with less reason to fear aggression than Russia (invaded twice in the 20th century, innumerable times before that) would regard such acts as hostile. And it gets worse. In 2004, the United States granted political asylum to Ilyas Akhmadov, former foreign minister of the self-styled Chechen republic and a close friend and ally of Shamil Besayev, head of Chechnya's deadliest jihadist movement and the man who masterminded the horrifying terrorist attack on the school in Beslan. As if that were not enough, Akhmadov was put on the U.S.

government payroll as the recipient of a research grant from the neocon National Endowment for Democracy. (Quite a double standard. Palestinians are terrorists, but Chechens are freedom fighters.)

Russia's democratic institutions have always been weak and fragile. In fact, they were nonexistent before 1991. What is Putin supposed to do? Force the Russian people to forget 700 years of Russian tyranny and turn into democrats overnight? Puffed up with their own importance, busybody fools like Madeleine Albright, Joe Biden, Richard Holbrooke, William Kristol, and Martin Peretz, among others, signed a ludicrous letter warning the West about Putin's dictatorial tendencies. (This following the Beslan slaughter of innocent Russian children.) A Washington outfit called the American Committee for Peace in the Caucasus is comprised of such individuals as Kristol, Elliot Abrams, Richard Perle, Frank Gaffney, James Woolsey, and Norman Podhoretz—all hawks where the Middle East is concerned but doves on Chechnya. The real purpose of the group is to justify Chechen terrorism, demonize Russia, and to seek to involve NATO in the Caucasus. These are the very same people who promised us a cakewalk in Iraq and are doing their best to get us to bomb Iran in order to make Israel safe. Just try and imagine the following: how would these “peace in the Caucasus” types respond if we were to substitute Palestinian for Chechen and Israel for Russia?

Russia is an ancient country with a great history behind it. The people who have got us into the Iraqi mess should try to keep their mouths shut for a while. As we do not permit anyone to tell us what to do—far from it—perhaps it's time to practice what we preach and mind our own business for a change. ■